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**BAPTIZED WITH A CURSE.**

**VOL. III.**





# BAPTIZED WITH A CURSE.

A Novel.

BY  
EDITH STEWART DREWRY.

'And a magic voice and verse  
Hath baptized thee with a curse.'—*Manfred*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. III.



LONDON :  
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1870.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

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# BAPTIZED WITH A CURSE.

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## MANUSCRIPT XXIII.

### AN ANONYMOUS LETTER.

“

‘DARKER and darker  
The black shadows fell—’

—yes, on me, on all I touched, on all around. My mother did not soothe me; she only roused — ten thousands devils! as if they needed *that!*—my fierce passions and jealous hatred yet further. And to drown, to crush their gnawing vulture-like preying, I flung myself madly into every excitement and dissipation.

For a week F— was at fault ; then he raised hope, only to dash it down. He had traced Nina to London Bridge Terminus, and out of it again, and then lost her entirely. Two days after, in the evening, just as my mother and I had gone into the drawing-room, after dinner, F— was shown in, and almost his first words were—

‘ I am afraid, sir, the lady has escaped us and got abroad.’

Then he told me his story. He had traced Nina to St Paul’s, thence to a baker’s shop, a Mrs Harper’s, in Ludgate Hill, where she had lodged for a week, calling herself Mademoiselle de Valère, a French lady only just arrived in London. He was a day too late ; think of that ! I

ground my teeth. Only the day before a young foreigner had come to her, but of her Mrs Harper could give no recognizable description. She had asked when the night train to Dover went, and after dark she and Nina had driven to London Bridge, and her companion took two first-class tickets for Dover, when they went on the platform. F— had traced the lady in the India shawl and her foreign attendant easily so far. The guard of the Dover mail had noticed them, had seen the attendant open the door of a first-class carriage as the second bell rang, but he could not say he actually saw them enter it, or get out anywhere on the journey. There was no doubt that Nina had gone to Dover, and F— had followed directly.

But he was at least fourteen hours behind her, and he could find no trace of her or her companion.

‘And I am afraid, sir,’ he concluded, ‘that the lady has contrived to change her dress and make good her escape to France. Have you the least idea who her companion could be?’

‘What was she like?’ said I.

‘Well, sir, Mrs Harper couldn’t say. Some people really don’t make any use of their eyes. She was tall, she said, nearly as tall as her lodger — Miss Nina Lennox, you know, sir, — and slight; but she wore a large dark burnous cloak, with the hood drawn right over her head, and hiding her face pretty nigh.’

‘Oh, then she was not a lady?’ said Georgine.

‘No, ma’am; not by her dress, at any rate. She spoke like one, the woman said; but, then, some of these foreigners have such a grand air about them. Then, sir, you can’t guess who she might be?’

I had been ransacking my brains and memory.

‘No,’ I said. ‘She knew no one who knew of her flight. She must have hired some girl to go away with her, so as to put us at fault.’

As I spoke the door opened, and my brother Walter came in.

‘Look here, Casper—oh, Mr F—, good evening. Look here, Cas; read it



aloud for mother. Dora got it by post, and I came here directly.'

I read aloud—

'All pursuit after Miss Lennox is useless, as she is beyond it. Her friends may be easy about her, as she is staying with a faithful friend, who hopes soon to persuade her to seek your protection.'

'Sir, permit me to see that letter,' said F—.

I handed it to him, and watched him anxiously. He shook his head.

'It gives no clue, sir; none at all. The writing is disguised, evidently, and the postmark "London" tells nothing, except that the letter was posted here.'

'Then,' said my mother, 'the writer is

in London, and my niece, too ; she never went to Dover.'

'That may or may not be, madam. The postmark only proves that the letter was posted here.'

'But can we take it as any relief to our anxiety ?' said I, impetuously.

'Well, sir, my own opinion is, that you may. If you'll excuse me, I never thought the lady in much danger of harm, because, from what you said, she knows what she is about ; and when her money was gone, and she found herself really adrift, she would come back ; most do, sir, that run away like that.'

I knew Nina better than to take such hope, but I only told him to do nothing

more till the[m]orrow, when I would see him, and he departed.

‘I tell you, Casper,’ said Falconbridge, ‘that you had better stop this pursuit if the child is ever to return to me even; to your roof, she never will.’

‘She shall, as my wife!’ I broke in, ‘if not before.’

‘Oh, bah!’ said my brother contemptuously. ‘Don’t talk heroic nonsense, Casper. You know well enough that neither you or laws of guardianship can do much against a determined woman’s strong will.’

A passionate retort was on my lips, when my mother touched them.

‘Casper, forbear your temper, for my sake. Make her your wife presently; and,

Walter, remember how a man or woman suffers whose love is rejected !’

‘I do remember, mother; I make every allowance, but Casper was unmanly to speak to the child as he did. Tell a girl she *shall* be your wife! he deserves to lose her; as he will,’ he added, turning to go.

‘As I will *not*, by God!’ said I, furiously.

‘Eh, Casper,’ said Walter, pausing, ‘you can swear by the God you disbelieve in and scoff at, it seems.’

He went out, shutting the door, and I flung myself on a sofa.

‘Mother, mother, there is a devil in me!’

‘Devil!’ said she, with a mocking laugh. ‘There is neither God nor devil!’

will *you* stoop now in your manhood to these priests' tales? Courage, Casper; you have sworn she shall be your wife. "Faint heart never won fair lady."

This was *my mother*,—this hard, mocking, atheist woman! *my mother!*

## CHAPTER I.

ANNA WINS BY A COUP D'ÉTAT.

‘WHAT a poor weary wanderer!’ said Nina tenderly, as the cameo-seller came in one evening. ‘What a dear, weary wanderer! Give me the box.’

She lifted the strap off her shoulder, and kissed the patient, quiet face.

‘Ah, Anna, while I had the power why would you not accept my offer? I never quite understood that refusal.’

‘Eh non, Mademoiselle? Because I

foresaw what has happened, and would not place either you or myself under an obligation to M. Casper, of which both of us would bitterly repent.'

'Anna, you were right; it would have been too much, and—but no, I won't talk or let you talk until you have rested and eaten. We will have supper first.'

Anna smiled, and obeyed, taking care that Corsare had a plentiful share. Finally, she sat down at Nina's feet, with the dog curled up on her dress.

'Eh bien, Mademoiselle; que voulez vous dire?'

'First, Anna, drop all titles, at least, when we are alone: we are friends, we are equals, n'est ce pas, mon âme?' she said in her winning way.

‘Friends? yes; equals only in birth. You have friends; I have none, Mademoiselle.’

‘Mademoiselle de Provence!’

‘Basta,’ said the Provençale, lifting her fine head. ‘I will forget, then, that I am a poor cameo-seller, and remember only that I am Anna de Laval, the friend and equal of Nina Lennox. Have you thought of the future, — you, who have never known a rebuff, a harsh word, or an insult?’

‘I could bear all that,’ began Nina impetuously, when the wanderer shook her head with a sad smile.

‘I know the world better than you do. I know your heart and sensitive nature better than you do; and I tell you, you do not know what it is.’



‘But, Anna, ma chère, what you can bear, I can.’

‘Gran’ Dio! do you *want* to suffer as I have done?’ said Anna-Marie, suddenly and passionately. ‘Sorrow will strike you fast enough, even in the midst of wealth. You fled away under the influence of intense excitement, of a mind stunned by a cruel blow; but now that is past. What right have you to give such grief to those who love you? to lay open to slander the fair name your father left you?’

‘Anna! my name!’ said Nina, starting. ‘Who will dare to cast a shadow on *that*?’


‘The world, ever so ready to stain a woman’s fame. Madame Georgine’s plaus-

ible story will soon be found out, and then the world will account in its own way for the disappearance of the beautiful Miss Lennox. Your flight was mad and impetuous,—to remain away will be wicked. Go back; go to Madame Falconbridge and her husband; they will know how to protect you from M. Casper's persecution.'

Nina had stood looking at her startled, fascinated by such an outburst from one habitually so quiet and languid.

'Anna, Anna, how beautiful you are!' she exclaimed. 'If I go to Lady Falconbridge, I cannot leave you alone to this life of solitary misery, lost to the station to which you were born and bred.'

The cameo-seller pressed her hand on



her breast, and her dark eyes filled, but she said, in her gentle, patient way,

‘I am used to it, cara Signora mia. I have no claim on your kindness.’

‘Have you *not*? All I can do,—oh, I forgot, I forgot!’ she said. ‘What can I do now? and yet, how can I leave you? I should be haunted by the thoughts of you alone in this miserable room, or wandering in this great London. It comes home to me now as it never did before. Anna, you told me that the Maestro—’

‘Mademoiselle, mille pardons, not that,’ interposed Anna gently. ‘Come, it is time we started.’

‘Not to-night, Anna, for you to return to this lonely room. I can’t do it! I *can’t* leave you so, child!’ she said, throw-

ing her arms round her with a burst of grief.

Bitter tears were in the wanderer's eyes, but she firmly unlocked Nina's clinging hold.

'It will be worse to-morrow night; we must go now,' she said steadily, and threw on her mantle, adding, with a faint smile,

'Corsare will escort us in safety. Come, amica mia dolce.'

Nina yielded, sadly and reluctantly; and with heavy hearts the two young girls went forth, and took their way through the crowded streets, till Anna suggested that Nina should not go to Lord Falconbridge's on foot at that time, lest the servants should talk; and then, calling a

cab, they drove off at a speed that soon brought them to the house.

Further than that no entreaties could persuade the Provençale to go ; she would only promise to come in a day or two. There was a close grasp of their hands, and they parted ; the street-door closed on Nina, the cab drove away, and the wanderer stood in the street, alone with her dog.

She looked up at the lighted windows, and saw shadows crossing and re-crossing, and heard a child's joyous laugh ring through the open sash.

She turned away, and slowly and wearily retraced her steps.

How utterly cheerless and lonely the room felt ! How very bare and cold it

was! the very dog whined; and shivering, sick with the miserable sense of loneliness and sorrow, the solitary child crouched close to him, laid her face on him, and sobbed herself to sleep.

## MANUSCRIPT XXIV.

## A BLOW RETURNED.

As a burning glass gathers the rays of the sun into one focus, so now all the feelings and passions of my life seemed concentrating into one point; a demon was leading me on, and where would it end? I seemed borne on an irresistible current to a black gulf, into which I must plunge, down—down.

Was Couthon right? is death nothingness? *is* all beyond the grave a vast blank?

Why not? It must be! it must be!

Oh that I had died when I was a child! Oh that I had never lived to see this misery and shame!

Let it pass; let me go on with my story.

A few mornings after the receipt of the anonymous letter my mother came in, her face flushed, her lips quivering with anger: I knew the signs.

'Casper, the battle has begun! Nina is at Walter's. I have seen her; she came last night.'

'You have seen her, mother? and not brought her home!' I said, setting my teeth.


'Go and bring her if you can,' said Georgine hotly. 'I tried gentleness, per-



suasions, threats. I told her that you would live in chambers, but she interrupted me; she would not drive you from your home, and she would neither eat your bread nor set foot under your roof. I told her I was her guardian, and law would enforce my rights, and she answered, in that calm, dignified way of hers, that she, too, could appeal to law, and obtain protection; that return here she never would.'

'But *she shall!*' said I, striking my hand on the table; 'by fair means or foul, she shall be my wife! Who was it she went away with—that foreign woman F—mentioned?'

'Woman!' repeated Georgine. 'It is strange that neither you nor I guessed




who she was; and yet how should we? It was that girl, that cameo-seller.'

'Damn her!' said I furiously; 'I will let her know of this the first time I see her; but for her we should have had Nina now.'

'Casper, Nina must have told that Roman girl where she was, or how did she know?'

'Ay; and I dare swear she planned that feigned escape to Dover, which, as it was meant to do, threw F— off the trail. I'll get the truth out of her.'

I took my hat and went out, I believe, with a vague idea of encountering Anna-Marie. How very different were my feelings towards her now to what they had been when I first met her in Rome! But



I walked the streets in vain, aimlessly, to get rid of thought. I was coming along Grosvenor-street, when I met Dr Harrington. We exchanged a few words, and then, as we shook hands, he added, half smiling,

‘By the way, I have just met, near the Grosvenor Gate, that Roman cameo-seller, whom you saw me speak to in the Gardens some time ago.’

‘Oh, the Fiora di Maria,’ said I, carelessly; ‘pretty creature enough. Good-day, Doctor.’

And I walked quickly on into the Park by that very gate.

Almost the first person I saw was the Provençale, under a tree, arranging her cameos and statuettes to the best advantage.



She looked up as I drew near, and saluted in her graceful way, but her smile was wicked, triumphant.

‘Ah, Monsieur, que la Vierge vous bénisse!’

‘So, Anna de Laval,’ said I sternly, ‘it is you, is it, who have dared to abet and conceal Miss Lennox from her lawful guardian?’

‘Comment, M. Casper?’ said Anna, opening her great dark eyes, and shrugging her shoulders.

‘I say that you, illegally, against law, have concealed Miss Lennox.’

‘Eh bien!’ said she, coolly. ‘And was not Mademoiselle safer with me than alone?’

I was taken aback, but after a moment’s pause I said, still more sternly,

‘I am not jesting: you have broken the law, and rendered yourself liable to punishment, if I choose to follow it up, as I will, unless you tell me the truth, which I have a right to know. Did you actually go to Dover? did Miss Lennox make you her confidante, or did you find her out? answer me all that, Anna.’

‘*Sainte Vierge!* Monsieur is not my confessor, or *Mademoiselle’s,*’ said she, with her grand air.

‘Anna, I have spoken—’

‘*C’est ça, Monsieur;* so have I.’

She did not even look up from the box she was unconcernedly arranging, and my passion was roused by her quiet contempt, yet it was nothing I could lay hold of, for she veiled it under that courtly courtesy of

hers, which nothing could shake or vary.

‘You dare not answer me,’ I said, grasping her arm; ‘but I will take means to make you speak.’

‘Monsieur must be very clever to succeed, where even those who had real power have failed,’ she answered, with the same courteous irony that always incensed me. ‘Demandez vos questions à Mademoiselle,’ she added, removing my hold with her hand,—such a small, delicate hand, that I could have crushed; and then, throwing the strap of her box over her shoulder, she called her dog, and gave me a parting salute and word.

‘All your law will not make Mademoiselle Nina return to your roof in any character; all your threats will

not frighten me. Adieu, Monsieur.'

'Do you think,' said I, with a cruel sneer that I meant she should take in its most shameful sense,—as she did,—'Do you think I don't know on whose protection you rely?'

She turned and looked at me,—such a look of dignified withering scorn as I shall never forget.

'M. Von Wolfgang, you are an unmanly coward.' Not veiled under courtly French or graceful Italian, but said in deliberate, weighty English.

I stood looking after her retreating figure as in a dream. My insult was flung back on me, as I deserved, but I neither forgot nor forgave the blow. It was not in my nature.

## CHAPTER II.

'She was his life,  
The ocean to the river of his thoughts.'

It was two days after Nina's return, and Lady Falconbridge had gone out driving with her children, while her guest remained at home alone; but restless, anxious, oppressed by a presentiment of evil, which she could not shake off, she found reading an impossibility, and had just risen to open the piano, when 'Mr Claverhouse' was announced, and the sculptor came in.



‘I am very glad to see you here, Miss Lennox,’ he said gravely, as he held her hand for a moment. ‘Forgive me, if I say that you should have come here from the first.’

‘I was wrong,’ she said trembling; ‘but I only thought of flight—to hide myself.’

‘In a most marked India shawl,’ added Stewart, half-smiling. ‘You saw your aunt yesterday—will she enforce her claim?’

‘I am in hourly dread of it; she said she could, and would get a writ of Habeas Corpus; Anna de Laval told me something of it.’

‘Anna a lawyer! That is a new character.’

‘She said that Walter told her, but he says he never did. You are smiling.’

‘I told her so, that she might persuade you to return.’

‘*You* told her!’ exclaimed Nina.

‘Yes; the night you went to Anna’s lodging she came and told me; I saw her write the anonymous letter to Lady Falconbridge, and I posted it myself. Anna told you that she had found you out?’

‘Yes,’ said Nina, trembling and bewildered, she hardly knew why.

The sculptor rose, and stood leaning against the mantelpiece, looking down in the sweet face uplifted to his.

‘It was not her, clever as she is,’ he said; ‘you were tracked by a far more astute and clever detective than even F—,

—my friend Cavagnac ; it was a week before either he, or I, or Anna found even a trace of you.’

A mist seemed to come over Nina, and she lifted her hands before her eyes, as if they were dazzled.

Stewart stooped, drew those hands away, and held them in his own strong, firm grasp.

‘Forgive me, Nina ; but I loved you too well to lose you, and leave you alone in sorrow.’

There is, perhaps, once or twice in a lifetime a moment when existence itself seems arrested by the intensity of feeling that is crowded into that second, and the tongue gives all its language to silence.

Nina lifted her eyes for a moment, and



then bowed her face on the hands that held hers, but he drew her to his breast and held her there.

‘My life, my only love, my wife!’

That holy word! that beautiful name! blessed indeed the woman who is enshrined in a man’s noble heart—his only love, his wife!

‘I hardly know,’ he said, presently—and his soft mellowed tones fell like sweet music—‘when I first learned to love you, Nina; it goes back to my boyhood, and has woven itself into my life like a golden thread, or a ceaseless strain of beautiful music. I saw you only that once, but I never forgot you; how could I? you became my inner life, my ideal, my poet love, shrined in my heart like a veiled

picture, an existence of the memory or a dream, whose strong influence tinges a lifetime. Years passed by, and I became famous, a master in my art, and then I fulfilled my promise given to my child-angel. I saw you, and the ideal became a reality; the dream took living form and warmth; and now the boy's memory, the poet's ideal, has grown into the man's deep, changeless love. You know now why I have never married.'

She took his hand and kissed it, in a tender, childlike manner.

'When I first saw you I was a little child,' she said, softly touching his hand now and then, 'but I seemed at once to understand you; your face, your voice,

every word you had spoken, were graven on my memory. As years went on, though I never saw you, I heard your name, and I was proud of it; your ambition was mine, your fame mine; your memory was never absent from me in childhood, in girlhood, in womanhood; it was part of my being. I knew that you would keep your promise to the letter, and come back, as you had said you would, and when you did. Ah, Stewart, if I had been older I might have known then what I do now; my own heart was a sealed book; love for the man I mistook for admiration for the sculptor.'

'Do you mistake it now, anima mia?' said the sculptor, smiling.

‘No; the book is unsealed, and all its language is love,’ she answered; and the sunlight shone down on her golden head, and fell peacefully on the beautiful face she loved too well.

## MANUSCRIPT XXV.

‘Hope withering fled, and Mercy sighed, “Farewell.”’

My hand fails me before the torture of my self-imposed task, but it is too late. I cannot pause now ; yet, if my story should be a warning that may arrest even one on the very brink of sin, the task will not have been a useless suffering.

I tried in vain to see Nina ; she would not grant my request ; and thus my mother, by my advice, wrote to Walter—she was too angry to see him—warning him that if



he detained her ward after two days she would appeal to the law, and obtain a writ of Habeas Corpus, to which Nina must submit.

This was his answer :—

‘MY DEAR MOTHER,

‘In two days I will withdraw the protection I have given Nina, and yield her to her legal guardian.

‘Yours truly,

‘FALCONBRIDGE.’

‘Ah, ha!’ said I triumphantly. ‘I thought law would vanquish him.’

So I said and thought, and once more hoped and dreamed of a future when I should call Nina mine.

The second day came, and about eleven o’clock my mother took the car-



riage and went to fetch Nina; but I, too restless to remain still, wandered out, I neither thought nor cared where, and I felt surprised when I found myself close to All Saints, Margaret-street. I saw a good many people gathered outside, and two carriages waiting; and as I came up, I recognized them: one was my brother's, the other Stewart Claverhouse's.

What were they doing there? I turned to a little Arab, and asked—'what was going on in the church?'

'A marriage, sir; we're a waitin' to see the bride come out.'

A sudden suspicion flashed over me, and put almost madness into me. I turned and strode into the church. I neither cared nor felt that a hundred eyes

turned upon me. I heard nothing, I only saw that group before the altar. There stood Dr Harrington in his white robes; I saw Walter, his wife, and Dr John, and Guy de Cavagnac,—I even saw Anna de Laval near him, saw them as in a dream, but there,—there, no fancy or dream, I *saw* Nina standing beside Stewart Claverhouse at the altar steps.

A lifetime was crowded into that moment; it must be now or never. It could not be that I was too late, and advancing to the chancel-steps, I spoke—

‘I forbid this marriage! the lady is under age!’

For one second, for a space of time yet more brief, if that is possible, there

was silence; then Stewart Claverhouse turned, and said calmly,—

‘You are too late; this lady is my wedded wife, before God and man.’

That face, that voice,—oh, that voice! would nothing destroy its charm to my ear? would nothing blind my eyes to the sublime beauty of that face? On every other there was triumph or exultation. I saw that mocking smile on Cavagnac’s sarcastic lips, but on his there was none: calm, grave, almost pitying, but irrevocable, he stood for ever between me and Nina.

I dared not face him. I turned to my brother with mad fierceness.

‘You! false deceiver that you are! your word is broken, your—’

‘Forbear, sir,’ interrupted Dr Harrington, commandingly; ‘remember that you are standing in the presence of God, and hold, at least, some outward reverence.’

I turned away. I remember leaving the church and passing through a crowd outside, and after that there is a blank. I can never recall how I reached home, or what passed till my mother returned. I remember that; oh, I remember that!

‘And now she is lost,’ she said, standing before me; ‘but there remains to you revenge.’

Oh, if she had laid my head on her breast, and let me weep away in tears of blood the awful demon that had entered into me! too deep now for outward passion; such gigantic evil is calm above.

I made no answer. I shut myself in my room, and sat down with my head on my hands, not thinking, scarcely even feeling; conscious for hours of nothing but the hell of passions within me, that seemed burning away my very life in their fierce fire. If this were what men call 'hell,' then indeed I could believe it.

'I HATE that man!' I said at last.

Fed by such jealousy as few know, nursed now by the one relentless instinct of destruction, it had grown with my growth, no thing of to-day called up by this last act but a deadly Upas whose roots went back long years. Had not this man from his boyhood been a living reproach to me? had he not made me fear him, dread him? had he not even re-

pulsed me tacitly? had he not been my superior, *my master* in everything, and taken from my very grasp the woman I loved? had he not been my RIVAL all my life, in all things?

It lifted its monstrous head in that dark night and stared me in the face, an awful thing of such hideous deformity, that I shrunk down appalled.

Did I know its name? did I grow familiar with it day by day, and week by week? did I hug it and cherish it, and never quit it, day or night, till it became my very life, and lost its terror in familiarity? Yes, I knew it now by its own fell name. It took possession of me, body and soul, and dragged me with it, down, down, down!

\* \* \* \*




## CHAPTER III.

## A HEAVY HEART.

‘GOOD - MORNING, Cavagnac ; where have you vanished to this month?’ was the salute of Tom Dacre one day, as he met the Count in the Park.

‘To Paris, mon ami.’

‘Do you know that your friend, the great sculptor, returned yesterday with his young wife ? but of course you do. Why don’t you, too, take a beautiful English wife?’ he added, laughing.






‘I will think about it,’ answered Cavagnac, lightly; ‘indeed, I have already made a choice.’

‘No; are you joking or serious?’

The Count’s laugh puzzled Tom; under all its half-mocking jest there seemed a vein of something more deep and earnest.


‘Just as it pleases you,’ he answered. ‘I will let you know when it is to come off. Come for a turn.’ And the two walked on together.

Neither had seen, or if Guy did, he took no notice of, a slight figure standing behind a tree near; but when they were gone it glided away to one further off, and sat down, covering the colourless face with the little slender hands.



Scarcely more than a child in years, Anna-Marie de Laval had a woman's suffering now. To solitariness the lonely wanderer had grown used; cast literally friendless on the world at barely twelve years old, all the ardent feelings and sympathies of childhood and early girlhood had been flung back on her own heart to die there; love and tenderness had never crossed her path, and often she had looked on it in others with a sad wonder and an aching heart.

Then there came a ray of light before which she bowed her soul; the sculptor found her, and soon a bond of deep sympathy and affection bound the strong man to the solitary child. To her he was some infinitely superior being—in



truth, *Il Angelo*—‘to her perfect,’ as she had said, ‘because she, at least, had never seen his faults;’ and the love she bore him was something different to, above, a human affection: it was a pure and entire worship; and hence Casper’s unmanly insult had fallen stingless at her feet; her answer had been dictated as much by indignant scorn for ‘*Il Angelo*’ as for her own insulted womanhood.

But with Guido di Schiara it was very different. When she first saw him she was no longer a child, though only fifteen in years; she was in mind, in feeling, in heart, much older; and Guido di Schiara, though his voice and intonation had drawn her, by their likeness, to *Il Angelo*’s, was not like him; no,—he was a man, and a

very faulty man, and therefore nearer to her, more on her own ground. To the sculptor her soul bowed, as to some heaven-born being, lent but for a time to earth; but this man had power to win her woman's love and break her woman's heart.

Was it strange? he had always been so gentle and kind; he had so much of Stewart's unconscious fascination and winning power, and she had so little to cling to and love, and was so very young. Was it strange that the very fibres of her heart, half-child's, half-woman's, had wound closely round this man, with all his faults and recklessness? Was it strange that, knowing the truth now, she should cover her poor, weary face, in such an agony of

shame and misery as she had never yet known, more desolate and alone than she had ever been before? and her first wild impulse was to fly every spot where she could chance to meet him; but instantly the fine, high instinct of pride and dignity crushed the thought as unworthy; she must bear, conceal and suffer, the old, sad story,

‘For woman the calm and the pain.’

A light step on the grass made her look up with a start. The Count de Cavagnac stood before her.

‘Sorrowing, chère Anna?’ he said, taking her hand, and his touch thrilled through her; ‘look up, and tell me you are glad to see me back from Paris.’

She tried to look up and speak, but the heart was full, and would not be entirely controlled; the blood flushed over her brow, and her eyes filled.

‘Mon enfant, you have given me my welcome,’ he said, gravely and tenderly.

‘Tell me why you are so *triste*?’

Tell *him*! how could she? but she recovered her self-command outwardly, though voice and manner were a shade more subdued and quiet, as he saw.

‘Monsieur, I cannot help it,’ she said, shivering. ‘Sorrow will not always be chased away.’

‘No, indeed, God knows,’ he said, bitterly; ‘but let that pass.’ You know why I went to Paris?’

‘Oui, Monsieur; you told me that you

and succeeded in arresting Louis Bonheur's schemes.'

'Ay, I have done that which I undertook, and it is my last professional detective service. I have left it, and stand here free. You, of course, have, as I asked you, kept M. Wolfgang under secret surveillance during my absence?'

'I have done so as much as possible, Monsieur; mais c'est difficile, n'est ce pas? He has deserted his usual haunts, and shuns his former companions; he rides out, walks out alone, as he never used to do; he almost forsakes the *promenades* of the parks for the more secluded parts.'

'I had rather have heard of his going mad, the *maladetto*! What does he look like,—his face, his air?'

‘His manner is that of a man pre-occupied,’ answered the Provençale. ‘He looks gloomy, down-looking, haggard; every line that dissipation had drawn and time smoothed over is brought out and stamped afresh. Several times I have thrown myself across his path, quite by chance, and saluted him; he has started, stared like one roused from a nightmare, and walked on.’

‘Without a word, Anna? He used to speak to you.’

‘He used to, Monsieur.’

There was a slight hesitation in her accent, a droop of the eye, an uncontrollable flush, that for a second crimsoned the colourless face that struck Cavagnac directly. His brow darkened,



and he laid his hand on her shoulder.

‘Anna, you are keeping something from me that I must know.’

‘Non, Monsieur; je ne—’

‘Tiens! why did you hesitate and colour, and shrink from my gaze? you are trembling now. Anna, that villain has insulted you, and by Heaven he shall answer to me for it!’

‘For the Madonna’s sake, no, Monsieur! let it rest; it was nothing.’

‘I will be judge of that: tell me the truth, Anna, or I will have it out of him.’

She shrunk from his touch, and her lips quivered painfully, as she said in a low voice,

‘It was after Mademoiselle’s return he met me, and tried, by persuasion and

threats of law, to make me tell him about her. I refused, and told him all his law would not force Mademoiselle to return or frighten me; and he answered, with a look and a sneer that no woman could mistake, "Do you think I don't know on whose protection you rely?" I turned and told him deliberately, "M. Von Wolfgang, you are an unmanly coward."

'Curse him for a dastard! he shall answer for his insult!' said Guido di Schiara, setting his teeth. 'Dishonoured villain, to take advantage of one he believed a defenceless stranger!'

'Who is defenceless, save by her own dignity,' said Anna de Laval, firmly; 'and for my sake, Monsieur must let that be my sole protection, and pass by the insult

for what it is worth ; M. Casper would ask nothing better than such a handle. The Count de Cavagnac cannot take up the defence of a wandering Roman cameo-seller without injuring her.'

It was a bitter truth, beyond doubt or denial ; and he ground his teeth, and turned from her, too deeply wounded and pained by the sight of that patient, weary face, and the consciousness that he had no power to protect her,—this girl, almost child, he loved so deeply, whose very youth and utter friendlessness bound her yet closer to his heart.

It was many minutes before the man could control and crush down the world of bitter feeling, and the strong impulse to claim at once the right of his strong love

to shelter her. But something at present still stronger held him back, and he turned to her with his usual calmness.

‘You are right, Anna; this time I will pass it by, for your sake.’

‘Mille graces, Monsieur,’ she said, gratefully; ‘mais que pensez vous à mon rapport?’

‘Anna, it gives me strange disquietude and anxiety. He is brooding mischief, for I tell you there is a hell-fiend somewhere in his atheist soul.’

‘Eh bien, he must still be under *surveillance*,’ said the cameo-seller.

‘Mine; not yours, Anna-Marie.’

‘Both, Monsieur, s’il vous plait. I owe the Signor Maestro more than I can ever repay.’

Cavagnac looked in her face and gave way.

‘ Watch him, then ; but, mark me, there must be no opportunity for a second insult.’

‘ Non, Monsieur.’

‘ I, too, will watch him at hours and places where you cannot ; so for the present, Anna mia, adio.’

‘ Adio, Signor Guido.’


He held her hand for a moment, and then walked rapidly away.

The wanderer watched him out of sight through blinding tears, and slowly took her weary way back to the crowded streets of mighty London.

## MANUSCRIPT XXVI.

## CLAVERHOUSE OF ERNESCLIFFE.

ERNESCLIFFE HALL! there before me  
rose the stately ancestral home of the  
proud and gifted race of Claverhouse.  
Even in this he passed me. Could Stone-  
heath Grange boast such a commanding  
site, placed on the summit of a height, ab-  
ruptly terminating on one side in a pre-  
cipitous and rocky descent to the sea, and  
surrounded by a noble park, stretching  
away inland, almost to the outskirts of



the busy and considerable town of D—?  
No, this ancient pile and family dwarfed  
the St Legers and their humble Grange  
indeed.

I stood gazing on the scene from an  
elevated point of cliff, so rapt in my  
own fierce dark thoughts, that I did not  
hear a step approach and stop, but a  
shadow fell across me, and with a start I  
looked round.

Just seating himself on a mound of  
grass was a venerable white-headed old  
man, looking to me something like a very  
superior farmer.

‘Good-morning, sir,’ he said, with a  
courtesy which no gentleman could have  
passed. ‘You are a stranger here, I  
suppose? what do you think of that place

up there—Ernescliffe Hall?’ he pointed towards it, and sweeping his hand round, added, ‘Most all the land you see, sir, belongs to the Claverhouses.’

‘Ay; does it, indeed?’ said I, well pleased to have within reach possibly more about this family than I had ever been able to obtain. ‘You know the family well, then, friend?’

‘Lord, sir, yes. I’m seventy-two come next Hallow e’en, and I and my forefathers have been their tenants for centuries. Why,’ said he, resting his hands on his stout oak stick, ‘I can remember the grandfather of the present lord.’

‘Lord!’ said I in surprise.

‘Your pardon, sir; it’s what we



call 'em. They're lords of the manor.'

'I see; then you knew the present lord's father, too?'

'Ay, ay, sir. I mind his birth, for I was thirteen years old. He had a long minority, which is generally a bad thing.'

'Very bad; was it so here?'

'No, sir; for there was a guardian who knew what he was about, and then the young man, Graham Claverhouse, was very clever—they're a clever race, sir, and always have been.'

'I have seen a portrait of him in London; a handsome man.'

'They've always been a handsome house, sir.'

'Was he liked here?' said I.

'It would be hard to say, sir; he was

in his earlier life, till he fell in love with a lady who refused him; he was still under age, but it altered him, I think, and brought out a latent, stern harshness of temper that brought about mischief afterwards.'

I was getting very much interested, and as he paused, I said,

'Mischief! then there have been troubles?'

'Lord, where is there not, sir? Well, the young master went away and never came near the place for three years, and then he brought home a bride, a young thing of seventeen,—Cora Egmont, daughter of Sir Guy Egmont. She was, sir, the most beautiful woman I ever saw, and as good as she was lovely, and accomplished; but

she wasn't happy, sir, for all that: beauty and wealth and high blood don't make happiness, sir.'

Did I need telling that ?

'Wasn't her husband kind to her, then ?' I asked.

'She had everything, sir, but his love ; and, besides, he wasn't kind to her about the children. It seems like yesterday that the heir was born, up there, in a room facing the sea.'

'Here ?' said I. 'I understood that Mr Stewart was born in the family house in London.'

'*He* was, sir ; oh, yes, he was ; but the heir was born here. Mr Stewart isn't the eldest born ; he's the fourth and youngest.'

‘ I suppose, then, that the mother was happier after her son’s birth ? ’

‘ Ah, sir, no ; it’s a sad story.’

‘ Poor thing ! he died young, I suppose ? ’

‘ Young, sir, but not in infancy. He was christened, sir, down yonder in Ernescliffe Church, after her father, Guy Egmont. How she loved that boy ! ’

‘ Was he handsome ? ’

‘ He came of a handsome house, sir, on both sides. He was a princely boy. One, too, you might lead, but never drive ; a wild, bold, high-spirited boy, that nothing could tame and nobody manage but his mother ; his father hadn’t a notion of anything but the old-fashioned, imperious,

harsh system of training, and wouldn't hear of any other; it was spoiling him, he said, but his way was ruinous to a temper like Guy's, and at last it came to an open defiance, about some trifle too, which made it worse.'

'What age was the boy, then?'

'About eight years old, sir, though he looked older.'

'Were there no other children?'

'Two, sir; twin girls of five years old. But about the son—'

'Yes; tell me how it ended.'

'It was worse, sir, after that; and then I fancy myself his temper got more harsh, and he grew jealous of his wife's influence and love for the boy. He sent him to a public school.'

‘Well; but that was right enough,’ observed I.


‘Yes, sir; but it wasn’t right to tell the mother and son that she spoiled him, and taught him rebellion, and that he should not see her in vacation. Strange, sir, that some men, clever and educated, never will learn how to manage a gentle woman and high-spirited boy.’

‘Very strange; but go on. I am interested in your story.’

The old man was pleased, and went on.

‘Well, he went gladly, for he was a wild, roving nature, always loving change. Mr Graham, he kept his word, and in his vacation took his wife and girls to Paris; and young Guy, he kept *his* word to himself. He was sent down here with a tutor,

but he eluded him, and actually made his way to Paris, though he was only nine years old, and saw his mother. I've heard the nurse say there was a terrible scene between the boy and his father; he wouldn't hear the poor mother, though she knelt to him; he must and would be master; and he sent Guy to a college or school somewhere in Italy, I think; any way, somewhere right abroad; and he didn't come home again for a long time. Then the eldest girl, Miss Cora, took cholera—it was a bad cholera year—and died, and her twin-sister, Miss Ela, pined and drooped by inches; the mother's heart was broken, I'm sure, with so much trouble. Then the second son, Stewart Graham, was born, and Mrs Claverhouse



was so ill that the master telegraphed to Italy for Mr Guy, who was only ten years old.'

'And was he in time? poor boy!'

'Yes, sir; she lived a week after he got home; and I think her death nearly broke the child's heart. He told me afterwards, one night that I found him lying on her grave, that she had made him promise to love and cherish his brother; and, good Lord, sir, how he did love that little child! Who could help it?'

Again the old man paused, and wiped his eyes, before he went on.

'Then Miss Ela died, and Mr Guy was sent again to the English public school, coming home in the holidays; but his father was worse, and now there was



no one to stand between them; and, besides, I always thought he suspected her charge to Guy, and was jealous of the love he bore his younger brother. Stewart, too, was his father's favourite; and at last one day, when he was about four years old, and Guy fourteen, he let out, in one of his passions of anger for some of Guy's reckless defiances, the wish that Stewart had been born the heir. I heard him, for I was in the next room waiting to pay my rent, which he always received himself. Mr Guy never answered, but the next morning he was missing. Every search was made, but in vain; and at last the master offered £1000 for any news of him, living or dead, advertising in the *Times*. A month after it was answered by

one of the police authorities in Paris, informing him that a lad, answering the description given in appearance and clothing, with a pocket-book bearing the name of "Guy Egmont Claverhouse of Ernescliffe," had died of a virulent fever in a low lodging-house in Paris. The master was like mad, and went over, but it was too late, sir. He told me himself that he found the house empty, the people gone, and all he could learn was that the dead boy had been buried in an obscure corner of some cemetery, without any stone. He never recovered the blow, sir,—never; the remorse killed the master.'

'But he lived,' said I, 'till thirteen or fourteen years ago?'

'Ay, sir; a ghost, a hermit, a broken,

miserable man lived shut up there; and at last couldn't even bear the only child left him. When he was still a child Mr Stewart was sent abroad to be brought up. Ye see, sir, he reminded him so of the dead son, child as he was, and his mother's image, too.'

'Was he like Guy, then?'

'Well, sir, it was singular; not in face so much he wasn't, but his voice and his hands were like him; they both had their mother's beautiful hands and voice.'

I started, struck by the coincidence. I had met a man who in those two points was like the sculptor.

'So that,' I said, 'is why Mr Stewart was sent abroad: he is more foreign than English, friend. I suppose, so little as he

has been seen here, he is looked upon as a stranger—unknown ?’

‘Oh no, sir; no, indeed. He is perfectly idolized by his people. As a boy, he used to spend his vacation in England mostly, and partly here.’

‘But till this summer he has been twelve years abroad,—away from here; and tenants don’t like a landlord who never comes near them, and leaves his affairs to agents.’

‘Not generally, sir; but the master isn’t an ordinary man, nor did he leave us to ordinary agents. In his absence, his granduncle, Dr Fantony, who was his guardian, mostly lived here, and took as much care of the property and people as the owner could have done,—a fine old

man, sir, — Dr John, we called him.’

‘I was at his school,’ said I, ‘at the time that the master was there.’

‘You were, sir? Then you know him? He is just married,—five or six weeks back, it was.’

I had brought this blow upon myself, and I turned the subject off hastily.

‘Yes, I know. Are visitors admitted to see the Hall, the picture-gallery, and sculptures?’

‘They used to be, sir, at certain times, for it’s a famous gallery; but it is shut up now for the present, while they are getting ready to receive the master’s young wife; they’re coming when the London season is over.’

I had learned all that Stewart and Dr

John had never spoken of; no wonder. It was a sad and painful story; and now, fearful of hearing about that marriage, I took my leave of the old man and of Ernescliffe. Had *I* any wish to cross its threshold? *I!* with that fell thing that had sent me there; with the demon whispering ever in my ear? I dared not. Some shadow of my former self made me shrink from such desecration. The towering forest trees, the vast ocean before my eyes, appalled me, and I fled from their presence as if the very waters saw *IT* written on my face, and I fled away back to the crowded city. I had sought solitude before now, now I began to fear it, to fear to be alone with myself. No, not myself, but *IT!*

## CHAPTER IV.

## MY MOTHER'S PORTRAIT.

‘WHAT, Angelo mio! at work and alone, with only Fidelio? Where is the bella Signora Nina?’

‘She is sitting at the feet of Gamaliel,’ answered the sculptor, looking up, and exchanging his chisel for Guido’s hand. ‘She is reading to the Doctor now, but they will give me a call presently. See, Guido, I have brought that in here, and hung it where I see it best,—my mother’s portrait.’

The Italian turned, and stood gazing up at it, repeating, half to himself, the last words—‘My mother’s portrait, my mother’s portrait;’ but his breast heaved, and he walked to the window, silently mastering himself.

‘You never knew her, Angelo?’ he said, at last.

‘Never,’ said the sculptor sadly. ‘She died when I was born.’

‘And your father was not fond of you?’

Stewart shivered. ‘No; he had not loved my mother.’

‘Can you remember your elder brother, whose unhappy story you told me long ago?’

‘I was barely four when he died; but



I have a curious dreamlike memory of a brother I loved and clung to the night he ran away; and nothing will ever persuade me that it was a dream. He came to my little bed and wept over me, as only a broken heart can weep, and whispered, that while he had life he would keep his pledge to our mother.'

Stooping low over the dog, Guido di Schiara said,

'He kept his pledge strangely, to run away and leave his charge.'

'Amico mio, not even you must speak one word against him.'

'What!' said the other, lifting himself, with a sudden gleam in his dark eyes; 'do you, then, love his mere memory so much?'

Stewart looked up, but that face baffled even him.

‘Yes; have *you* never worshipped a memory?’

‘God knows—yes; *my mother’s*,’ was the answer.

‘Angelo, do you love the dead brother more than the living Guido?’

The sculptor dropped the chisel, and held out his beautiful hand.

‘No; dead or living I could not give him greater love than I bear you. Ah, Guido, why did you ever let me mourn your death for more than twelve years?’

For one moment the Italian seemed to hold his very breath; then he laid his hands on Stewart’s shoulder, and looked

straight into the deep, sorrowful, gray eyes.

‘Swear by all you love most, living and dead, by all you hold sacred, to keep my secret.’

‘I swear.’

Guido di Schiara laid his hand on Stewart's, and drew him to the picture of Cora Claverhouse ; and, like an echo of his own voice, three soft words fell on the sculptor's ear—

‘*My mother's* portrait.’

The sculptor turned, and looked in the dark foreign face.

‘Guido, my brother ! my mother's son !’

Those strong hands were locked in an iron clasp, and the face of the younger

brother was bowed on the breast of the elder.

There stood the two sons before the portrait of the dead mother, whose heart had broken long ago.

‘Have I kept my word to *her*? have I not loved you? do I not love you better than life?’ the elder said at last.

Stewart lifted his beautiful face, and smiled; that face and smile, his mother’s over again; so like, that it broke down the remaining self-control of Egmont Claverhouse.

‘O Stewart, Stewart! you are too like her! you have made me tell you what should have died with me. I have dreaded this for years; the fear of it made me an

exile from you, the only one I loved, for nearly thirteen years.'

'Guido—'

'Yes, call me so; the name you have loved me by, more dear and familiar than my own; to you alone your brother; to the world the Italian Guido di Schiara, the name I have borne so long, and will bear to my grave.'

The sculptor started.

'Was *that* your secret? No, by Heaven, Guido, you are the elder, and must re-assume the rights of the first-born. You are Claverhouse of Ernescliffe; not I, the youngest.'

'Angelo, you cannot break your oath. You swore by the mother who bore us both, by all you hold sacred, and I hold

you to it. I voluntarily and gladly resigned my birthright to you when I was but fourteen. Guy Claverhouse died, and to the world is dead for ever; and under the same seal, I will trust the secret to your wife and Dr John; but,—nay, hear me out,' he said, laying his slender hand on his brother's shoulder. 'I swear, solemnly, before Heaven, that the hour in which the secret of the rights I have resigned passes your lips, will be the last hour you will see my face on this side the grave. I have sworn, and you know me, that I will keep that oath, cost me what it may. Mine has been a life of sorrow and trouble, and it should not be [your hand that exiles me for ever from the little I love.'

'But, Guido, Guido,' pleaded the younger brother, deeply troubled, 'how can I live, knowing that I am doing you and yours such injustice?'

'Me and *mine*?' repeated the other. 'I have no "mine," save you. There is neither man nor woman who cares whether I live or die; no being whom I care about, if that were all.'

'All? you, too, will marry; perhaps have children,' said Stewart; 'and then—'

A sudden shadow fell on Guido's handsome face.

'If ever I marry,' he said, 'my wife must be content to rank as Countess di Schiara.'

'But, Guido—'

'Basta, basta! you are paining me,

fratello mio. Once and for all, is it peace or war? must I go, or remain on my own terms ?'

'Remain on any terms,' was the answer; 'to part for ever, to know you were living, and separated hopelessly, would be more than either of us could bear.'

'It would, indeed, be too much, Angelo. Now, listen. You know from others the story of my boyhood, up till the night I ran away. Ah, it was no dream that I hung over you, and wept over you, such tears as leave their traces in a life; but I had made up my mind, from the moment father uttered those words, "*You* have ever been a rebel, a misery! I would to God that Stewart had been my eldest born!" I could love and



cherish you under another identity, as I have done ; and if I were dead, it left you the heir—and I disappeared. I took some money, and made my way to Paris, meaning to pass through and leave my death to be inferred from my complete disappearance.'

'But how you escaped the search made for you, Guido, is a marvel.'

Guido laughed slightly.

'I have often told you I was born a detective, and therefore the same instincts enabled me to guess at and baffle detection. You will wonder how I died of fever.'

'I do.'

'Le voici, mon frère. In Paris I hid myself in an obscure, not to say low,

lodging-house, in a low quarter; and a day or two after a fever got into the house, and many of the *locataires* died. I shared a small room with a lad about my own age and size; in fact, who answered equally well with myself to the advertisement description of me,—you know how loose they are. I have it now by heart, almost,—“A tall slight lad of fourteen, with delicate features, large brilliant dark eyes, curling coal-black hair, very dark, foreign looking,” and my dress followed. Now, though the Savoyard was not one bit like me, the description answered, as I perceived. *Pauvre garçon*, he took the fever, and died one night in my arms. Then an idea struck me, for I was desperate and reckless. I dressed the poor

boy in my clothes, put my pocket-book upon him, and money enough to bury him, took his clothes, and effected my escape; voilà tout, the Savoyard went away, the English boy died of fever; it was very simple.'

'Guido, how you have suffered!'

'Suffered!' He stopped, almost choked by a world of emotion. 'Well, well, it is passed now. I fell on my feet one way or the other, in the long run.'

'Where did you get the name under which I first met you in Italy?'

'Count Guido di Schiara? Oh, I got that about six months after my flight. I had worked my way to Italy—to Rome, and had the luck to pull an old gentleman out of the Tiber. He took a fancy to me,

because I was like his only son whom he had just lost. He was "un baron du pain sec,"—a Comte, certainly, but poor, and had neither friends nor relations; poor old man, he only lived a few months, and dying, left me all he had, a few hundred scudi, his old name and his title, till any one claimed it. My life has been a strange one of struggles and changes, and wear and tear, embittered at the very outset; but I was born a reckless, wild daredevil, and such I have lived. It is a wonder that it has not been knocked out of me, a still greater wonder that all vestige of good was not worn out; but you, Stewart, saved me. Ah, many a time in that long twelve years I was near you, but I dared not trust myself to return. I had so

nearly betrayed myself,—not once, but many times,—that I feared my own power of command. Then I met that child, Anna-Marie, and she spoke of you, called you by the name I had given you.'

'And you came back to me for rest,' said the sculptor with his gentle smile; 'yet, like me, you cannot long remain quiet. We are restless, wandering spirits, caro fratello mio.'

How softly and tenderly the words came from his lips; how still and peaceful it was. There was music in the very hum of the summer insects.



## CHAPTER V.

AFTER TWENTY-THREE YEARS.

‘Feelings of sadness round me now throng.’—ITALIA.

THE gorgeous autumn sun blazed down on sea and land, and threw the shadow of the lofty cliffs over the rocky beach and rippling waves. It fell on the grand old forest trees and wide lands and stately towers of Ernescliffe, with its princely site and sweep of marble terrace, whose whiteness gleamed dazzlingly in the sunlight, in strong contrast to the

soft green foliage and gorgeous colouring of the flowers in the gardens about and below it. But the deer were not the only living creatures in the park, for under the trees came a tall dark figure, with a tread so light, that it did not even frighten the timid animals; it came on swiftly to an open space where the view of the Hall opened full, and near an old blasted oak paused.

There stood Guy Claverhouse, a wanderer, an exile, a stranger on the very lands of his forefathers; there, on the very spot where three-and-twenty years before he had paused reckless, almost broken-hearted, and looked his last on the home where slept his idolized brother; where his worshipped mother had lived

and died; those for whom at fourteen years he gave up everything, and became as one dead; wild, restless, wayward was his nature, but noble, indeed, capable of such grand self-sacrifice.

There once more he stood, a bearded man, so altered and changed by twenty-three years of hardship and struggle and suffering, that none would have recognized in this Italian stranger the boy-heir of Claverhouse they had known so well.

There was the broad terrace where he had played with his infant brother or walked with his mother; there the nursery window, the very iron bars still there; and *that*, more than all else, broke the strong man down. How many in after years have looked with blinding tears on that



simple thing, *the nursery window!* what a host of memories crowd round it! 'shades that will not vanish.' No other eye, perhaps, could mark it out from those near it; but you would know it among twenty through fifty years of time and change; and Guy Claverhouse bowed his stricken head on the riven oak, and his whole form shook with sobs of such passionate agony as even the man's iron will was powerless to subdue for a long time. Memory for him was very bitter and sorrowful, but there was no regret for all he had resigned and laid down with infinite love at his brother's feet. His birthright, unlike Esau's, was a free gift.

Every onward step brought back the past, but he had mastered himself now;

and when he entered the gardens and ascended the terrace he was calm, though every familiar stone, every well-remembered piece of furniture, tried him afresh.

But light as his step fell on the marble, the ear of affection detected it, and from an open window came the tall graceful form of the sculptor.

‘Guido mio, I knew I could not mistake your step, though we did not expect you so soon.’

Their hands met in silence for a minute; and then, perhaps to veil deeper feelings, the Count asked,

‘And where is Dr John and the Lady of Ernescliffe?’

‘The old man is somewhere in his

beloved hot-houses,—I will send for him ;  
and Nina—'

'Is here to welcome Guido,' said the sweet gentle voice ; and with outstretched hands his brother's young wife met him.

He took them in both his own, and, holding them, stooped and kissed her broad clear brow gravely, tenderly.

'Sorella mia,' said the musical tones, that were so like her husband's, 'thus I at once give and receive a welcome to Ernescliffe.'

'It should have been otherwise,' said Stewart, almost under his breath, 'it should have been far otherwise.'

'Hush!' said the other, slightly raising his hand. 'Guy Claverhouse died

three-and-twenty years ago, in his boyhood.'

Three-and-twenty years ago! how far away his boyhood seemed, dim and shadowy as in a mist, seen as in a glass, darkly. So have many looked back on their youth, but few, perhaps, with so strange a story as Guy Egmont Claverhouse, once a mother's darling and heir of an ancient house; yet now, as he stood there, with those wide domains before him; now, when he had renounced for ever lands, name, and nation, he had never felt so proud of his ancient name and blood; never been so proudly, exultingly conscious that he stood there an English gentleman. He might look, pass for an Italian, but nothing could


undo his English blood and nation.

It was a curious smile, pleased, yet sad, that crept over his handsome mouth as he heard the Doctor's voice ask some one 'where was Mrs Claverhouse,' and Luigi Padella's answer, 'The Signora is on the terrace, I believe; the Comte di Schiara has come.'

And the next minute Dr John came quickly up, to give his warm welcome, in words to Guido di Schiara, in truth to the dead Cora's first-born son, whose childhood he had scarcely known.

\* \* \* \*

It was a quiet, still evening, the dead, lurid stillness of the calm before the storm; not a breath of air stirred the leaves, or glassy sea, whose mighty waters rolled



with a long, ceaseless swell on the rocks, with a low ominous moaning; and the moon shone down cold and calm from the blue, dim distance, cloudless, save for a low black bank along the horizon, and a little cloud like unto a man's hand high up in the heavens.

The sculptor, standing on the terrace, pointed to it.

'See, Guido, the gale is coming; and, hark! there are the sea-gulls screaming, that strange, weird cry; and how the sea moans and wails for those who will never come back to the shore, perhaps. I wonder,' he said, leaning on his brother's shoulder, and turning his deep, dreamy eyes eastwards—'I wonder how many will look their last on that grand old sea to-night!

“The ocean old, centuries old,  
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled.”

Ah, there the poet forgot that God holds  
the mighty waters in His right hand:  
“even the winds and the sea obey Him.”’

His voice was very soft and low, and  
he stood looking out to sea with a strange,  
rapt expression, such an unearthly light  
and beauty in his face, that a sudden pang  
went to Guido’s very heart. All that day  
there had been a heavy shadow, a pre-  
sentiment upon him as if something dark  
was nigh at hand, a sadness and gloom he  
had veiled, but could not shake off his  
mind. ‘It might be the subtle influence  
of the coming storm,’ he muttered, and  
tried to put it from him, as if that were  
possible.

He did not answer,—he could not; and both stood silent a long time, dreaming dreams, perhaps, for which language has no words, till at last, without moving his hand from its resting-place, or his eyes from their long steadfast gaze, that saw so far beyond the blue sea, Stewart said, very softly, in the liquid tongue of his brother's adoption,

‘Guido, there seems to have come into my spirit to-night something strange and peaceful that I never felt before. Look at that silver moonlight on the sea; does it not seem like a bright path into Heaven, easy to tread by faith, as Peter did?’

‘Easy to you, Angelo.’ He stopped, and lifted his hand to cover his lips, quivering with such emotion and sicken-



ing vague dread, as he dared not even think of.

‘I wish,’ said Stewart suddenly, ‘that Anna-Marie would take my offer at once ; it grieves me, it pains me to leave her as she is, owing her what we do ; it is wrong of her, but she again refused Nina’s entreaty, refused me. “Not yet,” she said, in that sweet, pleading way of hers ; “give me a little more time.” It troubles me, Guido. She is changed, too, of late ; a patiently sorrowful face hers always was, but now it wears a look of yet deeper endurance and pain. I must get the truth out of her, or perhaps Nina can ; but’—and his brow grew dark—‘if any man has insulted that child, or trifled with her, he shall answer to me for it.’

‘If any man ever harms that child I will kill him,’ said Guido, sternly and deliberately.

The sculptor turned, and looked steadfastly in his brother’s face, and then slowly a smile came over his own.

‘I thought it long ago,’ he said. ‘We two can read each other, though others cannot; and I thought long ago that you, who never before in all your thirty-seven years bowed to woman, have given all the love of your strong manhood to this lonely unprotected child.’

‘Ay,’ said Guido, almost passionately; ‘just because she is so alone and unprotected,—because she is a child and not a woman,—she has strangely wound herself into my heart. She has had her way

too long; she has refused you and Nina, but me! she shall hear me; seared as I am, she will let me in time win her love; give me the right to protect and shelter her with my name and love, for none other will Guido di Schiara call wife.'

'Guido di Schiara!' repeated the sculptor; 'no, that cannot be. I cannot suffer such injustice. Is your wife to know you only by a false name? Are your children to be disinherited? and for me! never!'

'Listen to me,' said the elder brother calmly. 'What I have said I have said, and mean, as you know of old. You wrong Anna-Marie. If she could not take me for myself as I should her, she should be no wife of mine. If she gives me the blessing of her love I will marry

her far away privately, under my own name; and publicly from here, if you will, under the name I have borne and will bear, and which my children must bear after me. If my marriage were to force upon me what I have renounced, I tell you I would never see her face again; I should become in very truth dead to you all; and you know what *that* would cost me, Angelo mio.'

'Guido, Guido, it is too much sacrifice,' said Stewart hoarsely; 'let me be alone awhile.' He wrung his brother's hand, and turned away towards the sea.


And the black bank of clouds grew darker in the heavens, and the sea-gulls screamed, and the sad sea moaned 'for those who should never come back to the shore.'

## MANUSCRIPT XXVII.

CAIN.

‘By thy brotherhood with Cain,  
I call upon thee, and compel  
Thyself to be thy proper hell.’—MANFRED.

It might have been years instead of weeks or months since *her* marriage, for all my sense of time and reason. It had driven me to Ernescliffe, it drove me from it; but peace and calm had fled for ever, and left me to the powers of hell,—the hell of my own black passions and evil nature; every passion concentrated now



in the one wild, insatiable, remorseless purpose of my life, from which nothing could turn me aside; yet I shrunk from every face as if mine had it written on it. The world should ring yet with the great sculptor's name as it had never rung before.

There it lay, next my heart, cold and hard, always there now, always loaded; the bodily form of my dread secret, the one thought and purpose that possessed me. I knew nothing else, felt nothing else, lived for nothing else; and when he went to Ernescliffe, I followed secretly, his evil genius.

I told my mother that I was going to join Tom Dacre in a shooting visit. One lie did as well as another, so that she be-

lieved it; but when I kissed her at parting, if she had only looked into my eyes with something of a woman's tender softness; if she had only drawn my guilty head upon the breast where it had nestled in my innocent childhood, and asked me to lay bare my heart to the mother who bore me, she might have saved me! she might have saved me even then!

I left her and went to D—. It was a town large enough to hide in; and then, night by night, and hour by hour, I watched, watched, watched, till I grew sick with the thirst for revenge, and desperate to execute it. How those days and nights passed I know not. I noted nothing; I was conscious only of that one

absorbing fell purpose ; the thing that had slumbered fitfully for nearly thirteen years, and now stood before me, encompassed me in the strong life of its gigantic horror. One night only is burned into my memory in letters of fire, and that—O God! O God! if there is one! what an awful night it was!

So still at first, not a leaf stirred a hair's breadth ; the long black shadows of the giant forest-trees in Ernescliffe Park never moved or flickered in the moonlight. The thick old oak where I lay concealed threw a black motionless shadow. The ancient Hall with its stately marble terrace lay before me, so near, that I could hear a voice through the open windows ; *his* voice, no other was ever like it, sing-



ing. Of all things, what had made him choose *that*?

‘Ah, che la morte.’ I listened almost with suspended breath to the voice whose strange wondrous charm had never fascinated me more than now; and when it ceased, it seemed as if the last remnant of good died out from me on the last strain of its mournful cadence, and left me body and soul to evil.

Then I saw him come out on the terrace—the Maestro, the great sculptor himself, more beautiful than any masterpiece that even his hand ever wrought, and with him was the man he loved, the man I hated and feared—Guy de Cavagnac. I could hear their voices, soft, low, distinctly, borne on the still, deathly air, not their

words, though I could distinguish that at first they spoke English, and then Italian, and though so like, I knew *his* voice from the Count's. I watched them, I strained my gaze to distinguish his features, and my ears to hear his words, but only one reached them, the name of Guido di Schiara in answer to the Count. This, then, was Cavagnac's real name. I knew his secret; it might serve my turn some day, I muttered, fiercely; and then I saw Stewart Claverhouse wring his hand, and leave the terrace. I watched his dark, slight form, moving silently—for his foot-fall had no sound—towards the cliff and disappear over the edge, down some narrow path, perhaps. My hand stole to my breast, and for a moment clutched what

lay there ; then gliding, creeping, like the serpent I was, I followed, under shelter of the trees and thick underwood, which stretched to the very edge of the cliffs. There was a steep, craggy footpath a little way off, and by it I reached the beach and paused, crouching behind a large piece of rock, of which there were three or four along the beach, within range of my eyes.

Had the time come at last, the moment for which I had watched for months ? I drew in my breath and set my teeth hard, as if that could still the wild beating of my heart and throbbing of my brain. Did I shrink now at the last from staining the night with so awful a deed ; now, when he stood there a hundred yards from me ? Did I shiver

when I saw his pale face so beautiful, so unearthly, so doomed? Oh, how beautiful he was as he stood there alone looking out to sea, looking beyond it, seeing what I could never see or know. Did only an hour pass, or a lifetime? did I watch the storm coming up and listen to the sea-gulls screaming as they circled just above the rising waves? did I hear the wind begin to rise and moan along the rocks and sigh in the trees above? did I hear the sea wail and sob piteously, softly at first, like a wailing child, so awfully human in its ceaseless moaning, that I listened appalled? did I see the lurid mass of clouds along the horizon lift and sweep upward over the heavens till the cold stern moon silvered their edges and

threw all else into deeper shadow? did I hear the thunder crash far away, and know that the storm was coming up swiftly now? did the wind shriek it in my ear, vainly trying to scare me? How could it? I, who had grown familiar with it, and hugged the hideous thing close, and knew it by its own fell name—MURDER.

How luridly black it grew, for all the moonlight. How motionless and statue-like he stood. Would he never move? would he never move? A fearful fancy seized me, and shook me with terror,—*had he died there as he stood?* I could not bear it; I must see him move, hear him speak once more; I must for the first and last time break loose from the spell of his

fascination, and pour out in one torrent the hatred and jealousy of years. The impulse gathered up its force too strong for me, and crushed the barrier.

With my right hand hidden in my breast, I left my concealment and approached him.

He heard the step, and turned directly, his noble form and beautiful face and head thrown out in strong relief against a huge mass of rock some sixty yards behind him.

I stood face to face with my rival, Nina's husband, and in that thought fled the last hesitation; every pulse, every consciousness, every feeling of my being centred into one point; yet I had never so shrunk before those deep mystic eyes or the grand beauty of that doomed face;

never before so shivered at the voice I had once loved to hear, shivered with the fear of its charm. I heard it now, with its soft, half-foreign accent.

‘Casper Von Wolfgang, *you* here! how strange and ill you look. Come away with me, for the gale will break in ten minutes; it will be an awful night. Come away from here.’

He half-raised his hand, that chiselled, beautiful hand; but I recoiled from his touch, and gave full swing to the demon in me.

‘If your hand could save me from all the tortures of your fabled hell, from all the thunders of your fabled God, I would not touch it; you, who since our youth I have sought, yet hated! you, who have

repulsed me and evaded me! you, who have been my rival all my life in everything! you, who have torn from me the woman I loved, and wedded her before my very face! Did you dream I could forgive or forget all I owed you? Ha! ha! you told me I had no soul, and you were right. You believe that you have one; you believe in a God! Go, then, tell Him this night how Casper Von Wolfgang dares and defies Him!’

\* \* \* \* \*

Did I see the moonlight flash on the glittering steel? Did I hear the report echo over rock and sea, and see him fall at my feet without a word—dead? Did I hear such an awful cry as I can never get out of my ears, and knew it, through



all its horror, for Anna-Marie's? Did I feel her wolf-hound spring upon me, and beat it back with the weapon, till a blow on the head stunned it for a moment? Did I fling the revolver at her, in the mad hope of killing her, too, and fly up the rocky pathway and away, away, anywhere, to shut out that dead face, and that child's awful cry? fly from the sea, from the storm, that broke over land and ocean; from light and darkness, from myself, and, O God! how could I?


Doomed, accursed for ever! How can I bear it, and live? An outcast, a murderer upon the face of the earth.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER VI.

## AZRAEL.

‘WHAT a fearful crash of thunder, Uncle Jack! I wish Stewart and Guido were in,’ said Mrs Claverhouse, shutting the piano, and coming restlessly to the window. ‘Where can they be? it is more than an hour since they went out. See, even Fidelio is uneasy and anxious,’—for the Newfoundland had followed her with an uneasy moan, and stood half out on the terrace, sniffing the air.




‘My child, they are safe enough; you young wives—’

‘Don’t—don’t laugh at me,’ she said earnestly. ‘I have felt so strange and uneasy all day; there is a vague fear on me.’

‘My darling, you are too sensitive and imaginative; isn’t she, Fidelio? See, Nina, how intently he is listening for his master. Ah, what is that for?’

The dog suddenly threw up his magnificent head, with a wild, deep, mournful cry, that was neither a howl nor a bay, but was inexpressibly strange and terrible, and, springing past his mistress, bounded forwards.

She stood with a perfectly white face, listening, straining every sense of sight and hearing.



‘Hark!’ she said, suddenly. ‘What is that? Great God! what is that?’

The tread of a dozen feet crushing over grass and flower and underwood, and the voice of Guido di Schiara, strange and hoarse—

‘Keep him down, or all is over! keep the poor dog down, Anna. Go forward, and warn *her* calmly, if you can.’

The wife heard no more, but glided white and shivering to meet the advancing men, but no word, no sound escaped her as she saw that Guido, Luigi, and two others bore a hurdle on which lay something covered with a mantle. She only looked in their faces, and fell back to Anna de Laval, who followed with the two dogs, and in her left hand the re-

volver. Only the tearless eyes asked the question the lips could not utter, and Anna answered it.

‘He still breathes. M. Auguste has ridden for a physician, and the priest.’

They brought him into the room he had left not two hours before, and laid the motionless form on a sofa, and the servants withdrew, all but Luigi Padella. Dr John asked the question the wife could not.

‘For God’s sake, how did it happen, Guido? What is it?’

Nina, still silent and tearless, awfully calm, had knelt down by her husband, removing the mantle, while Guido undid and threw open coat and shirt, but he raised his dark stern face for a

second to answer one word,—

‘MURDER.’

The word penetrated the young wife’s ear, and a whisper came from her lips,—

‘Who? who is—’

‘Hush! Casper Von Wolfgang.’

‘Oh, my God! oh, my God! it is more than I can bear!’

That voice so deeply loved reached the dying ear; the lips quivered, and the large melancholy eyes opened once more on the loved face.

‘Nina, mio cor’, I am dying. Give me your hand; lift my head.’

She clasped the slender hand that had wrought such wondrous works of art, and laid the beautiful head on her breast.

‘Will the physician never come?’ she

said. 'Guido, will he never come?'

The sculptor's low faint voice spoke.

'It is too late; the wound bleeds internally. Guido, give me anything for momentary strength.'

'This, Signor,' said Luigi, offering a glass containing wine.

Silently the elder brother took it, and gave it to Stewart.

For a moment he lay motionless, and then the wine revived him to a transient strength. He half raised himself on the cushion so that he could see his wife's face, and his glance went from one to the other.

It was a strange sad scene on which it rested. The young wife he must leave, kneeling beside him, his uncle, his faithful

friend rather than servant, Luigi, and closer, the brother, the man he had loved all his life, and at his side the friendless wanderer, the horror of that scene written in her dark eyes, never to be effaced while life remained. He saw it, and the weapon still mechanically grasped by her little hand, saw her wolf-hound, and saw his own faithful dog creep from its side and lay its noble head on his feet, moaning softly, piteously.

It touched them all to the quick, touched him so deeply, that for a minute he could only lay his hand in silence on the loving head he could not see for the blinding tears; but he dashed them aside, and still holding his wife's hand, stretched the other hand, first to his uncle, whose



grief was terrible to see, then to Luigi, and wrung theirs hard.

‘God help you all,’ he said, ‘for I know how you all loved me.’

‘O Stewart, my life, my husband, how can I bear it? O God! how can I bear it? he *must* live.’

‘Hush, Nina, my darling, my own wife: there is no hope, save in Heaven. I am dying fast.’ He paused a minute to recover himself, and then spoke again, but the soft musical voice was weaker, even now.

‘Guy, my brother, after my wife, the one I loved best on earth, my friend through life, give me your hand, yours too, Anna mia. What a little slender hand! See, Guido, yours can cover it as it lies in

it. Take it, protect her, for I leave her to you; but tell her what you told me to-night, that I may hear her own lips answer—'

'Angelo, not now, not now,' Guido said hoarsely.

'Hush! forgive me; it is too much, yet I must know. Anna, my child, surely, womanlike, you must know how he loves you. You did not—it is in your face—Ah well, you are so young—'

'Oh, Signore mio, spare me.' The child's head was bowed on the hands that held hers and Guido's in one clasp, and her slight form shook like a reed; but Guy Claverhouse, mastering himself by one terrible effort, for his brother's sake, self-sacrificing to the last, wrapped that slight

form within his strong arm, and stooping, pressed his quivering lips to her brow, sealing her with a holy kiss, his love, his wife ; and a peaceful smile lighted up the sculptor's beautiful face.

‘It is enough,’ he said, faintly. ‘Guido—Nina mia—trust in the Lord ; His will be done.’ The dark eyes turned to the loved face of his young wife ; then he laid his head on her breast, and with that smile on his face, died.

\* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER VII.

## AN OATH.

PHYSICIANS might come and go,—he knew it not; the storm might burst, and the war of the elements shake the very chamber, but it could not disturb the dead; the winds might lull with the dawn, and the wild sea abate its fury, but the great sculptor had looked his last on the grand ocean; the soul had returned to the God who gave it, and all that remained on earth was a murdered corpse.

The morning sun shone into that

chamber of death, and on those three who had never left the dead. How calm and beautiful he lay, the shadow of that smile still on the statuesque face, the chiselled features locked for ever in the eternal peace of death, that awful word, so lightly spoken, so often made a jest ; a fearful mystery, even when it comes by God's visitation,—when those who mourn can look upward and say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord ;' but awful indeed when it comes as death first came into this world of sin, by man's slaying hand.

Cut off in his glorious manhood, laid low in his noblest years ! Still the wife knelt there, motionless, tearless ; still the dog lay moaning and licking the hand


that could never more caress it; still the brother stood, stern, silent, tearless as the wife; still the poor wanderer, whom the dead had saved from despair long ago, crouched at his feet.

So the light broke and the sun rose, till at last a ray fell on the stricken head lying on the dead man's breast; and then suddenly the wanderer rose, laid her hand on that of the living man, and pointed to that bowed head.

It was white as driven snow.

He stooped to carry her away, but she put him gently back, and lifted her face, the face of a broken heart.


'Hush! it will not be for long, and I cannot leave him. Bear with me; it is only a little while.'



He looked at her, and lifted his locked hands above his head with such a mute passionate agony, as was terrible to witness, for, like theirs, it was beyond all usual sign.

‘It is better so,’ said Anna de Laval with a calm, stern sadness. ‘She is right. I know her heart by mine,—it is broken, as mine would break if you lay there.’

The calmness and steadiness of her low plaintive tones might have deceived most men, but not him. He read in it, in her dry eyes and still face, how she suffered; but he saw there, also, perhaps by the instinct of his own kindred feeling, the same deep, implacable resolve of vengeance as lay in his own heart. She looked up; their eyes met, and each read the other’s soul.



‘We understand each other,’ she said; and it hardly seemed the same Anna of a week ago.

‘A wanderer he found me, and a wanderer will Anna-Marie remain till the murderer is brought to justice. Till then we who loved him live for nothing else, but that one object.’

‘In the name of God’s justice so be it,’ said Guy Claverhouse, solemnly. ‘Here, in the presence of the dead and holy heaven, I swear that our feet shall know no resting-place, our heads no home or shelter, until the murderer is brought to justice.’

‘*Amen.*’

It was the wife’s voice, and thus the solemn vow was sealed.



## MANUSCRIPT XXVIII.

ISHMAEL.

'For a magic voice and verse  
Hath baptized thee with a curse.'

MANFRED.

THE train might whirl me away to vast London, and gain me four-and-twenty hours' start of those who would soon be like sleuth-hounds on my trail. I might fly and escape my pursuers, but could I fly from myself?


Was the demon satiated *now*, with blood, human blood, that was on every-

thing I saw and touched? A murderer on the face of the earth! Was it written on my forehead, and whispered in every breath of air? Did remorse seize my red right hand, and hurl me down to the unutterable hell of my own haunted soul? Did I see the knowledge of it in every passing face of man and beast, and shrink in terror from every passing glance? Did I tremble if even a dog looked at me, and curse it fiercely when it cowered or growled, as *hers* had done long ago, as if it scented blood in my very breath even then? Did I stop my ears and shut my eyes, to shut out that Italian child's awful cry, and that still, dead face turned upwards to the moonlight, in the locked, grand beauty of death? And how could

I, how could I, when it never left me for a moment? night and day, in darkness and light, in sleeping or waking, I saw it, as I had seen it in the moonlight at my feet, a murdered face.

Can I look back and remember all? Can I *forget* one hour, one moment? forget I fled from that spot a murderer? fled in wild horror from the shrieking wind and moaning passionate sea; fled on, cursing the hour I was born, the mother who bore me, the very blood I had shed; stunned, almost mad at first, till the strong instinct of life, the impulse of self-preservation, seized me? But oh, what it cost me to walk composedly into the station; to remember that if I took no ticket to London they could not trace

me there so readily; to face men with my guilty face, and try to look as if murder were not branded on my brow; to stand shivering with horrible dread that every step, every voice, was come to proclaim me for what I was; to be calm and collected, and restrain the horrible impulse that impelled me to look behind me continually, and out of window at every station, under the hideous fear that the murdered man would be there before me, and follow me again; to try and speak to myself in the tunnels, that I might grow used to my own voice before I reached London, and find at last that it was so changed and hollow, that I started and shrank, shuddering from its musicless sound.



Oh, for one moment of oblivion! Oh, to go back those few hours, and live them over again!

But I had grown more used to the strange sound by the time I reached what had once been my home. I must go there; I must have money. It was still so early that only the housemaid was up, and she stared as she admitted me. I pushed past her angrily, went to my study, and took all the money I could find in mad haste; but my mother had heard me, and as I turned to go, to fly once more, she stood before me.

‘Casper! is this my son? What has happened?’

‘Stand aside, and let me pass,’ I answered fiercely. ‘You will know soon

enough, for all England will ring with my name before this night, and then curse the hour you gave me birth, and yourself, who made me what I am. Stand back !'

She staggered, with her blanched face convulsed, and stretched out her hands ; but I recoiled from her grasp with a cry, and escaped from the house, from London, from England, accursed, an outcast, for ever.

\* \* \* \*


Let me try and write more calmly, if I can.

I escaped into Holland, disguised and hidden, safe for at least a few days. I tried to form some plan for my safety, but I could not think or keep two consecutive ideas, racked, maddened as I was by fear

and anxiety. What were they doing to find the assassin? and Nina!—O Nina, what had become of her? Was I doubly a murderer? I could not bear it. I got the English papers at all risks, and from them learned all.

Long ago—how many years it seemed now—I had jestingly told *him* that my name would yet be famous, little dreaming how fearfully I should fulfil my own words.

All England, all Europe, rung with the deed—and heaped execration on the once honoured and stainless name of St Leger Wolfgang. Men looked at each other in startled grief and horror, as if it were a national calamity; so young, so beautiful, so gifted, the sudden loss of the great



sculptor, and that in so awful a manner, was felt as a national loss. I flung down the papers; I could not bear to see his name, to see before me the blackness of my deed; then as by a fascination I seized them again, and devoured with my eyes every word there was of him

‘ whose name  
Was written on the scroll of fame.’

I read on and started. One paragraph explained the strange likeness of voice and hand between *him* and my enemy. ‘ The large estates of Ernescliffe go now to the unfortunate sculptor’s only and elder brother, Guy Egmont Claverhouse, who has for some time been well known in fashionable and *élite* circles as the Comte de Cavagnac.’



This, then, was the one they had believed to have died in his boyhood,—my enemy, my deadly enemy now. I should know where every blow and search came from.

But Nina, Nina ; was there nothing of her ? No, nothing ; they had noted everything else first, it seemed to my distracted brain.

There had been an inquest the very next day, and an instant verdict—yes, let me write it—of *Wilful Murder* returned against Casper Von Wolfgang, on the evidence of Anna-Marie de Laval, a Roman cameo-seller. And then I learned that that child had from Stewart's marriage-day watched me like my shadow, and scarcely lost sight of me. She had fol-




lowed me to Ernescliffe, and kept her vigilant watch there, curse her ! night and day, she told the coroner, resting when she could. How little I had dreamed that she had been so near that *night*, the 20th August ; she could have touched me almost as I stole into the Park. She told them that I had lain down under a tree near the cliff, and lighted a cigar ; and that knowing the Signor Maestro was at the Hall with the Signor Guido, she had turned aside, and descended to the beach, where she sat down behind a block of rock with her dog. She had not, she said, slept, except by snatches, for a week, and not at all the last forty-eight hours, so that she was worn out, and, doubtless lulled by the soft moaning of the sea, had fallen asleep.

My name uttered by the Maestro woke her directly, and she advanced so as to both see and hear. She repeated every word that had passed only too faithfully, and described my very expression.

‘It was,’ she said, ‘that of a murderer,’ and she had stood ready to let her dog loose upon me, but the whole had passed rapidly. I had been so instantaneous in drawing the revolver and firing, that, swift as she was, she was a second too late. Swift! I could say how swift she and the hound had been, for almost before *he* fell they were upon me.

Shivering, trembling in every nerve and fibre, I still went on reading. Cava-gnac’s evidence followed hers, but it was short. He had, he said, got anxious at



his brother's long absence, and gone towards the cliff to search for him. On the way he met Luigi Padella in conversation with his own attendant, Auguste Morel, who was mounted, having been into D—for his master. As he came up, they all heard, simultaneously, the shot and Anna's cry, and he and Luigi sprang down the cliff, and there he found his brother senseless, though still breathing. He sent Luigi for assistance, and despatched Auguste for a surgeon, who had, however, arrived too late: his brother only lived about fifteen minutes after they carried him in. I passed on: I saw that a warrant was issued for my apprehension, and that a price was on my head; I knew that *that* came from Guy Claverhouse. I saw

the advertisement, ' £400 for any information leading to the capture of Casper St Leger Wolfgang, and £1000 for his capture.'

And I wrung my blood-stained hands above my head: henceforth my hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against me.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## REST TO THE WEARY.

WHERE was Nina, the widowed wife? if Casper could have seen her, would he have recognized the Nina he had known in this broken-hearted mourner, still a girl, and gray-haired, so silent, so calm and tearless? she had shed no tears, from first to last, but moved about, the ghost of her former self, only she seemed to cling more closely and tenderly than ever to Guido and Anna, to all *he* had loved.

One night—the night before the

burial—only one short week since that night, though it seemed as weary years—she stole from amongst them, and the dog Fidelio followed her, as he had ever done since his master's death.

The three that remained looked at each other, but only Dr John, at whose feet Anna sat, looking up into the noble, sorrow-stricken face, spoke in a whisper,

‘She has gone to him. Oh, if she would only weep!’

‘Our tears are dried at their source,’ said Guido, in his stern sorrow; ‘and left to us who live, only darkness, and—vengeance. Hark, what is that?’

The dog, who pushed open the door, and came whining up to him, then turned again to the door, looking back, still moaning.

They followed the faithful animal to

the chamber of death—those three, and paused within the threshold.

There she knelt by the dead, the gray hair sweeping over his breast, the young beautiful face laid on the silent heart that had loved her so well; the slender hands clung about his, as if they had sought to warm them back into life; and there was a soft smile on the quiet dead face. The poor broken heart was at rest for ever. But the dog crept up, laid himself on his master's silent form, and

‘ With a piteous and perpetual moan,  
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand  
Which answered not with a caress—he died.’

\* \* \* \*

They laid them to rest in one grave; death could not part those whom God had joined together.



And then at last, when all had gone and left the brother, as he deemed, alone, the unnatural calm gave way, the strong man broke down, and bowing his face on the cold earth, wept such tears as are wept only once or twice in a lifetime. But a woman's tender hand lifted the head, and laid it on a woman's breast, and tears fell fast on it.

'Oh, Anna, my child! my heart is broken: he was my very life!'

She only drew him gently away, crushing her own grief, womanlike, to be the comforter in his hour of agony.

'O woman!

When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou.'

## CHAPTER IX.

## THOSE THAT WERE LEFT.

ONLY eight days since that night, yet it seemed so many heavy years. Impossible to remain at Ernescliffe, to miss every moment the two who were not. The doctor was a broken old man, too old to form anew the ties whose cords had been so awfully snapped asunder. Guido—always Guido now, the name the sculptor had loved—he clung to for the sake of the dead. But he had never known Cora's eldest son in his boyhood, and in his man-

hood only as an Italian stranger. His object in life was gone, and its light vanished.

‘My sun has set in heaviness,’ he said, with a saddened and beautiful resignation, ‘and my gray hairs are brought down with sorrow to the grave. God’s will be done.’

But the heart of the younger man only rose up in passionate stern appeal for justice on the murderer. He had sworn, and would fulfil.

The day after that mournful funeral the Provençale came quietly into the presence of the two men, and both started, the older not knowing, the younger forgetting, that they must part. She was


once more in her Roman dress.

‘Anna!’ said Guido Claverhouse, rising hurriedly.

‘Tiens; Monsieur forgets that I must go.’ It was the old quiet manner and low plaintive voice,—the manner more subdued and patient, the voice more weary and sorrowful, but still the same.

‘Go? Ah, pardon; yes.’ He turned aside, but the one great blow had almost numbed the heart to any lesser suffering. There was a sense of dead blank loss, a dull, aching, ceaseless anguish, an utter weariness and restlessness that made even this bearable, which before had been torture.

But Dr John looked from one to the other in pain and surprise.



‘You cannot mean it, Guido,—to let this child, *your wife*, go forth a wanderer?’

‘She cannot stop here; the world would talk.’

‘Wed her, then, at once. It is what *he* would have wished. Guido, if you do not!—do you love the child?’

‘Do I *not*?’ he said passionately. ‘See here how I love her!’ He drew her to his breast, and kissed her eyes and lips. ‘And yet she must go. We have sworn that we will know no rest or home until justice is done. We must go separate ways, each wanderers, seeking till we find.’

‘But, Guido, Guido!’ said the old man, deeply distressed, ‘trust it to those whose trade it is.’

‘I do; it is my trade. I have been a detective for years, and, perhaps, a better one than these. They have failed; they are, at least, at fault. See, I heard this morning—the detectives have tracked him to London, to his own house, and from that to Holland, then to Baden, and there they have lost him utterly, almost hopelessly, though they are still searching. Well, he may baffle them; but, by Heaven! he will not escape me or this child. Listen, Anna mia. Take this purse, go to London, and to-morrow evening come to the house in —— Square; I shall be there. And God keep thee, my own Anna, my darling.’

She drew herself gently from his hold, and kissing his hand with a strange mix-

ture of love and reverence, turned and knelt at the Doctor's feet; and it seemed at once graceful and natural for the young, slender girl to kneel before that venerable and stricken old man, and ask him humbly,

‘Are we wrong?’

‘No, my child. Go; and under God's laws obey in all things the man whose wife you are before Heaven. Your hearts have judged right: there can be no marriage while an unavenged murder lies at the door. But that strange decision,—Guido, it should not be; speak to her, use your authority, and forbid it.’

Guido folded his arms tightly across his breast. It was one more torture, one more stab.

‘ I have no authority over her actions,’ he said, turning aside. ‘ Ask her whether I have pleaded or not, and how she answered me.’

She gave him a pained troubled look, and clasped the old man’s hand, speaking earnestly and firmly.

‘ Monsieur, hear me. Kneeling beside *him* I swore before God, that “ a wanderer he had found me, and a wanderer I would remain until justice was fulfilled.” Dare any man forbid me to keep that oath? M. Guido knows that my heart is at his feet, but he knows that it would kill me to remain inactive here. Exonerate him of fault, if fault there is; he has pleaded, and would use authority if he had it. He only endures what he has no power to stop.’



‘Endures—yes. I see all now; but, my child, you are trying him very much, is it right?’

‘Ah, Monsieur, he has forgiven me; it is for Il Angelo’s sake,’ she said.

If the man she loved had failed to move her, how could he hope to do so? He only kissed the young face tenderly and gravely, and Anna de Laval went forth from the desolate house of mourning once more a wanderer, her dog her only companion.

It was not till after dark that the cameo-seller went to the old familiar house, now so changed. The hatchment told a sad story in itself.

Luigi Padella admitted her. ‘The

Signor Conte,' he said, 'was waiting for her in the library,' and ushered her in. Guido received her gravely, and went at once to the hard facts with which they had now to deal.

'I have,' he said, 'arranged all my affairs, and of course left Dr John at the head of everything. He will live here, our head-quarters, so that, when ignorant of each other's movements directly, we can always write to him, and through him, and for money also; remember you are to send for that as if you were already my wedded wife; promise me.'

'Je vous donne ma parole, Monsieur.'

He went on—

'The detectives have lost all trail at Baden, but their proceedings are not under

my commands, and are independent of all but their own chief; therefore I set myself and my private agents to work; wherever we find the murderer we can arrest him, as you know.'

'Oui, Monsieur; continuez.'

'There are four of us, besides one who is to remain and watch his mother, if perchance a clue may be so obtained.'

'Four, Monsieur?'

'Sì; myself, you, Luigi, and Auguste. To-morrow I go to Baden, you to Paris, and Luigi and Auguste will await my orders, in or near Baden. Probably one will go to America, and the other to Italy.'

'Does Monsieur think that M. Casper will have fled to Paris?'

‘I cannot tell; he may. We must watch everywhere; and I will give you a letter to the préfet I was last with, and he will give you every assistance. Beyond that, mark me, you are a free agent; do as you judge best, go where you think best, unless you hear from me; only keep me as much as possible *au courant* of your movements and disguises, and write always in Italian. You have the photograph of him?’

‘Sì, Signor mio.’

He took her two little hands, and held them, looking into her large, melancholy eyes, with such deep sadness in his own, and yet such love, that hers filled.

‘My darling, forgive me; yet one thing let me ask before we part,—to meet,

God knows when, perhaps never. Anna, call me by my name; tell me that you love me, for, indeed, my life has made it hard to believe that anything so young and pure as you can love me.'

'Vois tu donc que je t'aime, Guido, mon coeur,' she said softly; and as he bent before her she kissed his brow and lips,—the holy kiss of a wife.

And then they parted.

## CHAPTER X.

HOW M. LAMONTE RECEIVED THE  
CAMEO-SELLER.

THE sun had set, and night had fallen on the gay city of Paris, when a slight, girlish figure stopped before a certain bureau de police, on the steps of which lounged a sergent-de-ville, evidently off duty, enjoying a choice cigar. The tall, striking face and form, and picturesque foreign dress of the stranger, and the dog at her side, caught his eye, and he turned as she paused.

‘Ha, qui va là ? que voulez vous ?’ he said.

‘M. le Préfet Lamonte.’

The answer was laconic and comprehensive. The man took his cigar from his lips, and looked at the child.

‘Hein ! enfant, you art curt.’

‘Pardon, jè suis si fatiguée, et il faut que je voie M. le Préfet ce soir.’

The musical voice, the plaintive, weary accent, and young, sorrowful face, touched the man, for the French are a kind-hearted people.

‘Ah bien, petite,’ said he kindly ; ‘for the sake of your sweet eyes you shall see him. Follow me.’

The Provençale followed him silently up-stairs to a large handsome room, where,

busily writing at a table, sat a fine-looking man of middle age.

Her conductor knocked, and entering, said respectfully, 'Monsieur, here is a young girl asking to see you.'

'I am busy; send her away,—a mendicant probably,' said the official, not moving.

'No, Monsieur; a cameo-seller; but she seems very anxious to see you. She looks very different to her class,' he added.

The official ears were pricked up directly.

'Peste! well, let her enter.'

The man obeyed, and the cameo-seller entered with a graceful salute, which no royal dame of the old *régime* could have rivalled. M. Lamonte looked on the beau-



tiful melancholy face, and all his vexation vanished.

“Well, my child, and what is it you want?”

“Will Monsieur read this?” and as she presented the Count’s letter, her dark eyes scanned every line of the reader’s face.

M. Lamonte read it, then put it down, took off his spectacles, and leaned back in his chair.

“This letter accredits you, the bearer, as the agent of M. le Comte di Schiara. What is your name?”

“Anna-Marie de Laval, Monsieur.”

“And your age?”

“Fifteen years.”

“I gave you a year over that. Your domicile?”

‘Monsieur, I am a wanderer.’

‘Pauvre enfant,’ said the Préfet, thinking of his own young daughter. ‘But where were you born?’

‘In Provence, Monsieur.’

‘Have you known M. di Schiara for long?’

‘No; not for long; about six months.’

‘You know his history, what he was?’

‘Oui, M. le Préfet.’

‘Bien; I am an old friend of his; asseyez vous, mon enfant; and tell me what you want.’

‘Merci, Monsieur; it is about the capture of the murderer, St Leger Wolfgang.’

‘Ah, I remember your name now; you saw it done?’

The child shivered, but went on firmly,  
 ‘There is, as Monsieur of course knows, a heavy price on his head, and advertisements for his capture out in every country and city. The English detective tracked him to Baden, and there lost him; but M. di Schiara himself went there, and with much trouble traced him to Vienna.’

‘And there lost him?’

‘Entirely, Monsieur; up till now, most completely. M. Wolfgang is no fool.’

‘Eh, no; he must, indeed, be clever to escape Guido di Schiara,’ said the Préfet, with a slight laugh. ‘We used to say he had a magic hand. I have known him a whole year in finding his man; and he will now, mark me.’

‘*I know it, Monsieur ; or I shall.*’

‘*Je le crois ; continuez.*’

‘*Eh bien. M. Guido thinks that Wolfgang is at present in concealment, but may come disguised to Paris ; and if so, he will probably frequent the maisons-de-jeu, the theatres, cafés, et cetera, all places of excitement ; here is his photograph.*’

She took several from her cameo-box.

‘*M. di Schiara wishes him watched for, he being personally responsible for any expense ; vous comprenez bien, Monsieur ?*’

‘*Oui, oui ; but you, too, are searching for this assassin ?*’

‘*I am ; but there are many places where I cannot go with safety, even with my dog. M. Guido made me promise.*’

‘*Ah, that is just like him,—a noble-*

hearted man, with all his faults; he would never put any young girl in danger, even to capture his brother's murderer. Is there anything else I can do for you or him?'

'Monsieur is too kind. Only send any information you may obtain direct to London,—to Scotland-yard, and to "Dr Fantony, No. 15, — Square." And tell me, where is Louis Bonheur?'

'Here in Paris, under surveillance; if you want to see him, you will find him at the Café Dusèque. Use my name if you find it convenient.'

'Merci, mille grâces; I kiss Monsieur's hands,' said the graceful Southern.

'I wish you success, de bon cœur. Carry my regards to the Count di Schiara .

when you see him. Adieu, mon enfant.'

'Adieu, Monsieur.'

And once more the child passed out into the cheerless night.

But weeks and months went by, and still no clue was found, though weary feet went from place to place, seeking the trace that was effaced. Even Guido di Schiara could not find the thread he had lost in the Austrian capital; and the world began to say that the assassin had become a suicide. But three knew him too well to fear *that*,—those two who were seeking him through the wide world, and one who remained shut up in what had been his home and hers—the atheist mother.

## MANUSCRIPT XXIX.

'An army of phantoms vast and wan  
Beleaguer the human soul,'

PURSUED as by a thousand demons, I dared not pause or rest anywhere. Rest! for me there was none; by day and by night in hourly dread of capture, in dread of the phantom that never left me! how could *I* ever again know what rest or peace meant? I had flung them behind me once and for all.

Holland was too near; and I fled to Baden for no particular reason, with no

particular plan, save the instinct of preservation. The same instinct drove me still onward, to a capital where my trail could be lost in the multitude. I assumed a new disguise, and fled to Vienna, but I dared not stop even there—his blood rose up from the earth, and cried aloud, ‘Thou art accursed for ever!’

And I fled before the curse as before a living thing.

Disguised so that I might hope to baffle even Guido di Schiara himself, I left Vienna, and made my way, my escape into Switzerland; and then leaving all frequented routes, I turned aside on foot into the mountains, seeking there some obscure hiding-place, where I might be safe for at least a time. I had money that would last



me for a long time, and I hoped vaguely to be able to communicate with my mother, and when pursuit was given up as hopeless, escape into some far-off land.

Let me pass on quickly. Late one night I arrived, worn and weary—oh! how weary—at a small hospice, far away up in the mountains, a lovely secluded spot, to which I had strayed, and where surely they would never think of looking for me, even if they had traced me through all my disguises, from Vienna, or beyond the Austrian frontier. So remote was this hospice, that the good monks might almost have been in another sphere so little did even a whisper from the outer world ever reach them. I say good monks, and I mean good, though some violent

Protestants may smile if they read this. There were only ten of them, old men; but as far as ever I saw, they lived in peace with each other, and in fulfilment of the ministering duties they had undertaken, simply and sincerely; and to me they were ever kind and courteous hosts during the whole twelve months I boarded in their hospice. An atheist I came there, and an atheist I left, sneering, scoffing in secret at their credulity and blind religion, at what they believed their deity and faith; but though of course it was impossible that they should not find out my scepticism, I took care it should never offend their prejudices. If they had known, if they had only known that they were sheltering a murderer, would they

not have cast me out from amongst them ?

\* \* \* \*

I look back with an intense and sickening horror to that period when Time itself seemed to stand still, and leave me to the awful monotony of Solitude, to the fearful companionship of Remorse.

At first I had been stunned, blinded ; hurried on in my frantic flight from thought ; but here—here ! Was that Solitude that was peopled with a thousand demons, when the light and the darkness became alike to me in the black hell of my guilt ?

It grew upon me day by day, and never left me for a second—*his* face, his voice—the ever-living presence of my gigantic crime—‘ an army of phantoms vast

and wan,'—it was before me wherever I turned ; in the sunlight and moonlight ; in the glare of day and in the gloom of night ; looking at me through the darkness with those deep, spiritual eyes, whose sad, doomed beauty filled me with unutterable terror ; in every sound, through everything, I heard his voice, now far away, now in my very ears.

Was I going mad ? Was the phantom only in my brain, or real ? Did I try to find oblivion in sleep, and find him there, too, as he had been in life, as I had known him, in his boyhood and his manhood ? but ever at his side there was a slight figure, with its loving face and deep blue eyes. But one night I dreamed I heard the wild, sobbing sea and the wailing

wind, and through all that strange, horrible darkness of a dream I saw a grave, and I knew, I thought, whose it was. I knew the sculpture over it was *his* work only, but I was impelled by a fearful fascination to draw near and read the names and dates; *his* name and hers, Nina Theodora Claverhouse, his wife; and the dates seven days between them.

The horror of that dream awoke me, and I cursed aloud in my guilt and misery, for I knew then that she was dead, and murder twice written on my brow!

Had that wretched woman's curse come true now,—‘There is a devil in you, that will drag you down to hell, where you belong’?

Did my brain reel? Did all my German lore crowd month after month more darkly on it? Did I see a murdered corpse wherever I turned, and go about, a fearful, shivering, haunted thing, the ghost of my former self? Did I know myself, or was it an evil spirit in my likeness, to whom I was sold, body and soul? Did I look behind me, trembling like an aspen, and see no shadow in sunlight or moonlight, and creep away into darkness, that I might not miss it?

Did the past come back to me, hour by hour, and did I hear again my scoffing sneer, wondering dizzily why my voice was so changed? 'You are a dreamer, fond of fabled beliefs;' and then, as from a distance—oh, how far off!—came his

answer,—‘ Fabled, Casper? Ah, I forgot, you have no faith or God—pover infelice.’ Did I almost shriek aloud, and shut my ears, to shut out those deep, pitying tones? Did I mutter fearfully that I was going mad, that my nerves were shaken, that I was the slave of a disordered fancy?—a slave!—and then shut my ears, stifle it as I would? Did I hear that strange, soft, haunting voice answer back—

‘ You, Casper, are the slave of your Atheism and your Pleasure ’ ?

Did I beat my murderer’s hands on the floor, and stagger dizzily away like a blind man, and then lift them up and curse God, if there was a God, hugging my dark atheism, as I had hugged that fell thing years ago—long years ago?

Long years ago! yet when I asked them how long I had been amongst them, they looked at me surprised, and answered, 'Twelve months.'

One year—only a year! it had seemed a lifetime of agony and torture!


I left it one night, lest its horrors should kill my brain. Excitement, oblivion, or I should go mad! And I fled away into the wide world again.



## CHAPTER XI.

## TWO WHO MET IN THE CAFÉ ITALIEN.

ONCE again in Paris, but now the snow was falling fast, and the wind drove it full against the window of an elegant private apartment in the Café Italien; cold and cheerless enough without, though within the blaze of fire and gaslight made it bright. On a fauteuil lay a man's cap, of the kind worn now in the Royal Navy, and a small black bonnet with a thick veil attached to it. Their



owners were the sole occupants of the apartment,—a tall bronzed man of seven or eight-and-thirty, who was pacing slowly to and fro, and a girl of sixteen, who sat at the table with her face resting on one slender hand, and her dark eyes anxiously watching her companion.

‘And what,’ she said at last, ‘have Luigi and Auguste been doing?’

The stern brow unbent, and the lines of care and sorrow softened for a moment, at the sound of her voice.

‘They have been doing their best,—searching, watching, like us, but with as little success. No stone has been left unturned; but I tell you, Marie, that in all my experience I was never so utterly at a loss,—a dead loss. I do not know

which way to turn: it is all darkness and misery, misery! Anna, if I pause, or think a moment of the past, I feel crushed beneath the weight of loss. Time but deepens such wounds.'

'It is a poisoned wound,' she said, wearily dropping her head on her hands. Even the power to comfort was gone from her for the time.

He looked at the drooping girlish form, and heavy tears came into his dark eyes.

'Forgive me, mon cœur,' he said, bending over her with inexpressible tenderness; 'I did not mean to pain you, —the very first time, too, of meeting after so many months. I am selfish.'

'*You* selfish!' She looked up in the

dark handsome face and lifted the soft silky black hair from his brow. 'You are too like *him* to be selfish. Your whole life has been a sacrifice.'

'Hush, hush! nothing done for him was sacrifice,' said Guido, turning aside.

She said nothing, only lifted his hand to her lips in silence.

Life was not all dark and sorrowful while he had her love.

She first broke the stillness.

'You wrote to me to meet you here, but you have not yet told me what you have done. Where did you go to when you left Marseilles a month ago?'

'I went to Vienna again on the chance that, even after a year, I might recover the trail, but I have only found

out how our search has been so useless.'

'Dites moi, Monsieur.'

'Our advertisements are, you know, still in the journals, and one of them was answered by an English gentleman, personally, in fact, for he called upon me; for he said that what he had to say was so slight and merely supposititious, that he was almost ashamed to trouble me. I thanked him, and told him that to an experienced detective the merest shadow was often a clue.

'It seemed he had just come from a walking tour in the Swiss mountains, and had found his way one night to an obscure and most remote little hospice, where he remained two days. In conversation the monks mentioned a guest, who had left

them a month before in the night, suddenly and mysteriously, after being there a whole year. He had, they said, never gone beyond the walls, and had shunned even them; had always seemed pre-occupied and unhappy; and had latterly seemed sinking into a nervous, unsound state of mind, starting at every sound; evidently in a constant state of dread and fear. "No wonder," a monk remarked, "when M. Schwartz was an atheist." All this struck my informant as worthy of reporting, and on arriving in Vienna he went to a bureau de police, learned there that I, M. di Schiara, was in Vienna, and called.'

'M. le voyageur Anglais was clever,' observed the cameo-seller.

‘C’est vrai. I left for la Suisse that day, and went to the Hospice of St Michel, where I learned all they could tell of their late guest, and it tallied assez bien, despite his clever disguise. I was satisfied that the bearded, spectacled, middle-aged M. Schwartz was Wolfgang.’

‘Then, Monsieur, there is a step gained,’ said Anna-Marie, with a momentary flush on her colourless cheek. ‘We are sure he is alive, and once more in the world.’

‘Ay, and will remain there. I see how it has been: the solitude and monotony of the hospice was more than his guilty soul could bear; and he has fled, trusting either that pursuit is over, or that he can escape it. I was wrong to give

way to despair even for that moment,' he said, with a sudden gleam in his brilliant eyes; 'there is hope now, though he has a month's start of us; he has broken from the torture of solitude, and will seek forgetfulness in wild dissipation; he will rival his early youth, only now he must live by gambling.'

'Or get money from his mother, Monsieur.'

'Mia cara, he may, but I hardly think he will try it; if he does, so much the better for us.'

'Guido, he may have fled to America.'

'C'est possible, but Auguste is in New York, and has been for six weeks. Wolfgang has a disadvantage, not in being handsome, but in being peculiar; his ap-



pearance is such a curious mixture of Creole and German. If he was fair he could disguise better; by change, not mere concealment.'

'I understand you; a fair person may paint or stain dark, but a dark one cannot paint fair so easily; though a young, slightish man may become stout and old, and dark brown hair like his become fair, or dead black.'

'Exactly; but no disguise, I rather think, could deceive you or I.'

'Non, Monsieur; none. But what if he hides again in some obscure corner?'

'He cannot, unless he communicates with Madame his mother,' answered the other. 'He must have money. I think he will come here to Paris, like a moth to

the candle ; and I will leave you here, for I must go to London for a few days on business. It is impossible to own large landed property, and spend money as we have been doing, without the master hand now and then appearing ; and Dr John is not well. Come, Anna, mia cara, I will take you to your lodging.'

She smiled faintly, as he carefully wrapped her mantle about her.

'Do you forget,' she said, 'that Corsare and I are always out till late? It is only in darkness that such as Wolfgang dare venture out.'

He only stifled a heavy sigh, as she took his arm ; and under his care for, at least, a short while, left the Café Italien.

## MANUSCRIPT XXX.

IN A CAFÉ IN A FRONTIER TOWN.

ONCE more in the wide world, hunted like a wild beast, a price upon my head, fearful of every sound and face and voice; yet my disguise was good, my transformation complete, and the passport which took me over the French frontier in no way answered to the descriptions and photographs out of Casper Von Wolfgang.

‘M. Franz Hermann, age forty years, height five foot ten inches, slight stoop in



his carriage, reddish hair, turning gray, thick whiskers, moustache and beard, and florid, brown complexion, thick reddish eye-brows, arched, black eyes, straight, well-shaped nose, scar of a sabre cut across the left cheek, and a small purple spot under the right eye, the face much wrinkled.'

Who would know in this M. Hermann the once handsome dashing St Leger Wolfgang? and I felt something almost like security as I turned one evening into a café in a small French frontier town.

There were several men in the room smoking, talking, and reading the journals. One or two were English tourists, the rest were French, two Italians, a light-haired, wild-looking German student, and

one American gentleman—a southerner, I found by what he said. I took a place apart, ordered coffee and one of the day's journals, and read, the hum and buzz of talk coming vaguely to my ears for some time; but at last an exclamation from the Englishman caught my ear, and chained every sense I had.

‘By Jove! that everlasting advertisement again! One is tired of seeing it.’

‘What is that, sir?’ asked the American.

‘This one, for the apprehension of Wolfgang, the murderer of the great sculptor, Claverhouse.’

‘Oh, ah, yes; it has been in the American papers for a year, at least,’ returned the other, while I sat silent, intent.

‘Ay, and in the French, Italian, German, everywhere. My belief is, the villain is dead. The devil’s got him long since, or he would have been taken.’

‘It was the most horrible and deliberate murder that has startled the world for many years,’ remarked a Frenchman. ‘The poor young wife, too, it killed her, I believe?’

‘Oh yes; she was a mere girl. It broke her heart, poor child: she died the night before his funeral.’

‘What was the motive for the crime?’ asked an Italian, laying down the journal he was reading.

‘Oh, the old story,—jealousy. Wolfgang was a cousin and rejected suitor of Mrs Claverhouse.’

‘Do you know, Signor Inglese, whether Il Angelo finished that sculpture he was doing before his marriage, one, I mean, for the principal figure of which the Conte di Schiara sat? or is “The Wreck” his last work?’

‘No; he finished the other shortly before his death, and it was on view in London after that, for three or four months. The Duke of S— offered a fabulous sum for it, but the brother, Egmont Claverhouse,—the Conte di Schiara—refused to sell it at all, or any other work of Il Angelo’s in his possession.’

‘A pity; but of course they are visible, for Schiara (I have met him) is too true a lover of Art to shut it up.’

‘He is; they are now in the famous

picture-gallery at the family seat, Ernestcliffe, and open to the public.'

'How came he to be called "Il Angelo?"' asked the German student.

'Well,' said the Englishman, half-laughing, 'it originated, I believe, with a child, one of his models, the cameo-seller who witnessed his murder. She found his name, I suppose, difficult to her Italian tongue, and used to call him "Il Angelo." The name somehow got into the Italian journals, and was taken up.'

'Are they still searching for the murderer?' asked the American.

'Oh no; of course not. These advertisements are kept up by the brother, but the police gave it up long ago, months back; *they* think he is dead.'



‘Suicide, most likely.’

‘I don’t know. He was a sceptic, a regular scoffer; and I fancy these atheists, with all their talk, don’t care to face death. I’d sooner put an army of bold, open sinners on a battle-field than an army of scoffers and infidels.’

‘So would I, sir. Hadn’t Wolfgang a mother?’


‘Yes; terrible for her, poor woman. She has remained shut up in her own house ever since the murder. He has a half-brother, too, Lord Falconbridge; but he and his family went to Cannes, and are still there, I believe.’

‘I wish,’ laughed the American, ‘that I could catch sight of the villain; I would earn the £1000.’




All this I heard, and turned perfectly sick. I could not bear it longer, and I left the café.

I could not sleep that night. Is it a wonder? My crime stood before me in appalling magnitude; and once more I fled before the hideous phantom, before the mad terror of capture. It seemed around me, before, behind, above, in every face and sound. I fled to Hamburg, and flung myself into play; anything for forgetfulness,—oblivion. I laughed the loudest, and played the last and wildest; yet I won, and won largely. My tongue was most glib, and my jests the most scoffing; but in the wildest revel I dared not pause or look behind, for it was there—a ghastly Presence, a whisper ever in my ears of



what might have been. Oh, for one moment's power to retrace the past, and undo the deed that was done! Oh, if I had only listened in other years to the being who would have been my good angel; but I would not. I put away the light, and now I stood a hunted felon, mad with the remorseful, frantically futile wish to undo the irrecoverable past; alone, in soulless darkness,—a murderer!

A hunted felon! What if the police had given me up, and left me to be my own curse? he, the brother, had not; he had distrusted me from the first, and watched me, and him I feared. I knew Guido di Schiara too well to dare to hope: as long as he had life he would never abandon the pursuit.



I dared not long remain in the same place, or retain the same character; but excitement, play, I must have! Better to take my chance in cities and capitals than again face the horrors of solitude.


## CHAPTER XII.

THE MAN IN VELVETEEN WHOM  
GIOVAN' MET.

‘ Baffled, weary, and dishearten’d,’

sick at heart, alone, and sad, the cameo-seller turned one snowy night from the brilliantly-lighted Boulevard des Italiens, and sat down on a door-step with her dog, listening vaguely to the notes of an organ somewhere down the rue, playing that beautiful and never-wearied-of melody, ‘ Ah! che la morte.’ The child heard at

first vaguely, then listening, till the heavy tears gathered in the dark eyes and fell fast on her black mantle. To her it was inexpressibly sorrowful, for it was one the sculptor had often sung for her in Rome, and it was, Guido had told her, the last song he had sung the night of his murder ; and, unheeding the cold and falling snow, she sat with her face hidden in her mantle, not noticing that the sound had ceased, till a sudden movement of Corsare and a man's step in the snow made her look up, and rising, stand still. The new-comer was an organ-man, walking slowly and wearily, with his hands in his pockets, but he looked up at the dog's whine ; the eyes of the two wanderers met, and the recognition was as immediate as delighted.



‘Giovan’ Tofanni!’

‘Anna-Marie! que je suis heureux!’ exclaimed the Parmese, gallantly raising to his lips, with the manner of a courtier, the hand she held out. ‘I thought we should meet again some way or other. Your beau chien knew me, too, and was glad.’

‘As I am; Corsare always welcomes a friend; but you seem weary, Giovan’. Unslung your organ, and sit down.’

‘It is too cold; and I do not feel so weary now I see a friendly face and hear your gentle voice. Why do *you* sit? it snows, and is too cold for such a delicate-looking Signorina as you.’

‘Merci bien, mon ami, I am not delicate; but it is cold,—very. I will walk



with you a little way on, if you will have me.' She wrapped her mantle about her, shivering; drew closer the black veil that covered her head, and the two walked slowly onward.

'So you are still a cameo-seller?' said Giovan', glancing at her box.

'Ma chère! how should I be anything else?'

'Oh, je ne sais pas,' shrugging his shoulders, with a smile in his bright eyes, 'only the Madonna meant you for une grande dame, not a cameo-seller.'

'Grâces; if ever I am une grande dame I will remember Giovan',' said the Provençale, half-smiling.

He laughed, and touched her dress.

'Why have you abandoned your grace-



ful Roman dress for this black dress and mantle?’

‘It is more convenient at present; one does not always care to be so marked,’ she answered.


‘But you *will* be marked, in spite of dress,’ said the young man frankly; ‘you must know that; plenty have told you that.’

The girl coloured slightly, but she sighed.

‘I wish, Giovan’, that every one had said it as kindly and harmlessly as you; insult is very painful to bear.’

‘Ay, but we get used to everything,’ said Giovan’, giving his load a hoist.

Anna-Marie smiled, amused at the thorough man’s answer.



'Not that,' she said quietly. 'A woman scarcely gets *used* to insult, it stings each time; mais au diable tout cela,' she added, shivering. 'How long have you been here? where have you been all the year since I saw you in Londres?'

'Oh, mostly in Angleterre, or la France. I mean to go further south till the winter is over. One of my *camarades* and I are going down to Marseilles. Why don't you?'

Anna de Laval shook her head.

'No; I must stop here awhile. I am engaged to several artists.'

'Ah, I wish Madame la Sainte Vierge had given me beauty. Look,' said he suddenly, stopping her at a shop, 'here is a face assez beau, n'est ce pas? but I would



sooner have my own than this, — eh ?’

It was, amongst many others, a photograph of Casper Von Wolfgang below an advertisement for him, that caused the Italian’s remark.

‘ Mais oui, en vérité !’ said Anna energetically, and drawing him on again. ‘ He is a *maladetto*, and will hang yet for his crime.’

‘ He would thank you. Mais ce portrait là,’ said Giovan’, ‘ reminds me of a man I saw to-day looking in a *boutique*, I think, at this very photograph. I was playing at a house further up, and noticed him as I stood, first, because he looked so long in the shop, and because he was of my fraternité.’

‘ An organ-man ?’

Giovan' nodded, and said, laughing—

‘But he had not been one long, though.

He was not used to it, for even as he stood he kept hoisting the organ, as one does an unaccustomed weight; he walked with it uneasily, bending under it, and he was neither small nor weak-looking; and when he stopped at a house to play—Oh, ma foi! il m'a fait rire!’

Despite herself, Anna was amused at her companion's lively chatter; at least it diverted thought, and was a friendly voice. She encouraged him.

‘Was he so awkward, then?’

‘Awkward!—vous l'avez dit! he was half a minute unslinging; and when he had played the first tune of his *répertoire*, he fumbled at the stops, evidently not

knowing well how to handle them ; when they paid him he seemed half-ashamed, and when he went on again he hoisted his organ in the most *gauche* manner. " Mon camarade," thought I, " I will have some plaisanterie with you." '

' And did you ? '

' Yes ; I overtook him easily, but first I looked in the boutique, to see what had attracted him.'

' You were very curious, mon ami ? '

' Bien ; curious, if you will, but there was nothing that I could see except a picture of Madame l'Impératrice and that photograph and advertisement. So I overtook and saluted him.'

' What was he like ? '

' C'est bien comme une femme, cette

question là !' laughed the Parmese merrily.

'He was no beauty, and not under forty ; he had long, rusty, warm, brown hair.'

'Reddish, in fact ?'

'How rude you are, Mademoiselle. No, not reddish. He wore all his hair thick, like an ourang-outang ; he had shaggy, overhanging eyebrows, and his eyes were, I think, black.'

'Not as sharp as yours, perhaps, mon ami ?' put in Anna, very quietly.

'Not beautiful, like yours,' retorted Giovanni. 'Mais retournons à nos moutons.'

'A moment ;—was he Italian, this novice ?'

'He ! no ; Anglais, I think. Why do you ask ?'

‘N’importe; continuez. What did you say to him?’

‘I was very polite. “Bon jour, camarade,” said I; “are we going the same way?” He did not seem inclined to accept my company, and answered that he was going straight on, whether that was my way he did not know; so, though he evidently wished me at the devil, I kept on. “You have not taken up this long?” said I, touching his organ. “Long enough,” said he shortly; “this many a month.”’

‘Which you did not believe?’

‘Certainly not. I had eyes; so I answered, “Je ne suis pas un blanc-bec,” and asked him what he had been looking at in the shop window. “Nothing particular.” “It is a hard life enough,” I re-



marked, "especially in winter; and till one is used to it the organ is a weight. Yours is new, n'est ce pas? your stops and handle seemed to work stiff, or else you are new to the organ." He told me savagely, "Allez à l'enfer!" So I returned the compliment by informing him that M. le Diable would certainly receive him "à l'enfer," and if he had any message for him, I was at his service.'

'For which, I suppose, he cursed you?'

'I dare swear it, but I did not stop to hear it. I turned on my heel, and left so surly a comrade to himself. Ah, who is that who saluted you?' he said, interrupting himself.

A middle-aged man in a military cloak, whitened with snow, saluted in



passing, but immediately wheeled, and addressed her in a low voice. 'Go home, mon enfant; it is snowing fast, and too late for you to be out,—after ten. Who is that man you are with?'

'A wanderer, like myself, Monsieur; un ancien camarade—a compatriote.'

'Eh bien,' said M. Lamonte, still unsatisfied. 'But go home, ma chère enfant.'

'Not yet, Monsieur,' said Anna-Marie; 'not just yet, s'il vous plait.'

The significance in her soft voice, slight as it was, caught his ear directly.

'Eh quoi!' he said, briskly; 'avez vous—'

'Chut, chut! pas encore, Monsieur. I will, perhaps, see you to-morrow morning.'

'Bien; à dix heures,' said he, and walked rapidly on.

'Who is that?' asked Giovan.'

'C'est M. le Préfet.'

'Sainte Vierge! est ce donc que vous êtes agent de police?'

'Non. Are you going to your *logement*?'

'Yes, it snows so fast. But I will first escort you to yours.'

'Grâces; but I am not going in yet. Which way do you turn?' for he had paused at the corner of a somewhat narrow long street, lighted less by lamps than the glare from two or three buildings, which both knew well to be gambling-houses.

'Down this,—it is a shorter way. What! not you, too?' as she still kept at his side.

‘Are you tired of my company?’

‘No, indeed; but—’

‘Soyez tranquille, mon ami. I know Paris of old,—eh, Corsare?’

Corsare licked her hand, and followed close behind her, while his mistress and her companion kept on, though the snow was driving in their faces.

But as they neared one of the maisons-de-jeu Giovanni stopped abruptly, and laid his hand on the girl’s arm.

‘Voilà!’ he said; ‘that man in velvet who has just come out of the maison-de-jeu,—it is him—my novice. I know him, despite this blinding snow, for I saw him under the glare of light. I wonder if he has gambled away his organ?’ he added, laughing. ‘He has

stopped, uncertain. Do you see?’

She stood bending forwards, straining her eyes to see the figure he pointed out.

‘Peste on the snow and darkness!’ she muttered between her teeth; then putting her slight hand on Giovan’s, she said quickly, ‘Giovan’, if you would do me a favour, go up to him and address him. I want to hear his voice.’

‘You cannot at this distance.’

‘It must do; he must not see me. Allez vite, mon ami.’

She drew herself and dog hastily under an archway, and Giovan’ walked quickly towards the man, little guessing that Anna watched as if for life and death. She saw him pause near the man in velvet, and heard him speak in his jesting,

jaunty manner; but the man's voice, as he answered, came indistinctly through the snow and wind. She could only tell that it was gruff and angry, though for all that, and through every disadvantage, something in it struck her finely-attuned ear as not belonging to his condition.

Then she saw Giovan' turn on his heel laughing, while the man stood looking, probably scowling, after him. Anna saw him; she would fain have warned her companion to pass the archway by, but she dared not move while the man stood watching.

Giovanni came up, and paused, asking gaily—

‘Have I done my devoir?’

‘Sì, sì, grazie; go on, for the Ma-

donna's sake ; take no more notice of me ;  
I will see you at your *logement*. Where is  
it ? quick !'

'Numero 10, Rue d'Eau ; bon soir ;'  
and Giovan', taking the cue, walked off.

Pausing at the street-corner, and looking back, he saw, dimly through the snow, the man in velveteen walking swiftly away ; and he fancied he saw Anna's slight figure and white dog leave the archway and follow ; but it was so indistinct and momentary, for the heavy falling snow had so assimilated both girl and dog to its own whiteness, that it might well be his fancy. He could not distinguish them from the snow, and hurried home, wondering who and what this patrician cameo-seller really was.

## MANUSCRIPT XXXI.

## THE CLOUDS GATHER.

I WAS once more in Paris, the gayest capital in Europe. What made me go *there*, of all places? a fascination, an inevitable fate? I know not. I went because there I could find excitement, because I could pass my days in a crowd and my nights at the gaming-table; not that I dared now to set foot within those palaces which I had frequented in my wild youth, for there might be one chance

in a thousand of encountering some who had known me in former years.

Former years ! then I was indeed wild, almost a *roué*, but still free, free of blood-guiltiness, still *myself*, St Leger Wolfgang ; now I stood in the same city, a haunted thing, a ghost, a shadow, a devil among men ; an assassin, fearful of light and of darkness, of men and of solitude.

I left the German M. Hermann at Dijon. I came into Paris Rudolph Sletzinger, from Frankfort, organ-player.

I laughed in bitter derision at my transformation. I, a common organ-man ! I, who had always despised the whole class, holding them lazy, idle knaves, who took to it because they would not work ;



I, who had never seen one of them without a sneer and laugh at Nina, because she had always a kind word and often a silver piece for them.


Now I was to find that she had been right; it was work, hard work, too, for those who had to live by it, or follow it for years; walking and standing from morning till night with a heavy load, for a full-sized box-organ is heavy. It came strangely; I felt ashamed, miserably ashamed, in my disguise; it seemed as if every one must see through it; pride of class, the class and name I had dishonoured, which crime had not dragged down, was wounded now by this humble occupation; the pence I earned stung my hand, and many a time I would have

given much to fling them back with a curse; the instrument, too, pained me to carry, to handle,—it always seemed slipping; and the strap pressed on my chest, and impeded my breathing, and, being unaccustomed to it, I felt it a burden every moment; I could not set the stops or hoist and unsling it readily; and it made me very awkward in every manipulation of it, so markedly, that it was instantly detectable by any professed *joueur d'orgue*, for one came up with me one day, curse him! and told me so. I shook him off; how could I bear any comrade when I dreaded every living creature? It was a heavy, cold day, with a gloomy gray sky, threatening snow.

I stood that evening by the Seine,

with the darkness above and around me, and the deep, dark river flowing at my feet; it looked so peaceful and quiet. Was 'Lethe's fabled stream' a dream of the ancients, or a reality? Death, death! hideous word of terror to me; was death nothingness? Was there no Deity, no future, no soul? What was soul and immortality, and future? the shadowy mysticism of my German lore, or— No, it could not be. I dared not think; the grave must, must be the end; to doubt that were perdition.

I wrung my blood-stained hands, and fled away to the gaming-table. I remember seeing a book there, and opening it. It was 'Manfred.' I saw the words,—I read as by a fascination, that fearful incant-



ation, till the large drops of sweat stood on my forehead; and flinging the book fiercely away, I turned to the table, and played wildly, recklessly, with a mad excitement, that the maddest gambler there never had rivalled. How should they? *they* had no blood to forget, they had no hideous crime to scare them alike from life and death. Yet after awhile even the very madness of excitement appalled me, and drove me from the heated *salon*, out again into the night.

How cool the wind seemed; the ground was white, the snow falling fast, too pure to touch me, yet I turned my face to it, but as I turned, I fancied I saw two figures through the darkness and snow, coming along the deserted street. Of one I was

sure,—a man with a load on his back, it seemed, but of the other I was not sure. I noticed the man suddenly quicken his pace and approach where I stood. I knew him now, curse him! the organ-grinder who had addressed me in the morning, and he did so again.

‘Ah, bon soir, mon camarade; comment vous portez vous? have you staked your organ on a last throw of the dice, and lost?’

A fierce answer in my own voice was on my lips, but I remembered in time my assumed character, and spoke in a rough tone.

‘What the devil is it to you if I staked it against all your saints and gods, and lost?’




‘Oh, nothing, mon brave; nothing, if you played your soul against hell, and lost,’ answered the man.

‘Damn you!’ broke furiously from me.

‘Merci, vous-en,’ said he, turning on his heel, laughing.


I stood, cursing my passion and imprudence, and watched him, with a vague alarm and fast-rising suspicion. Why did he turn back, instead of keeping his way on? Had he come up to me on purpose, and spoken with a purpose? guilt made me fear even such trifles. I saw his figure dimly through the driving snow pause near the spot from which he had quickened his pace before. I am sure he turned towards the houses, as if speaking to some



one, and then instantly walk rapidly away, the way he had come.

Terror seized me, I scarcely knew of what, or of whom, but of *something*; and I fled, turning constantly to look behind, to see it through the driving snow and darkness, and looking in vain; but walk as I would, it came on faster, a nightmare horror, from which I could not fly. But I kept on madly, up one street, down another, to baffle my pursuer, if one there was beyond my crime, till at last I reached the miserable *ruelle* in which I lodged. Dared I stop there? no, not for an hour. Something stronger than myself impelled me still to fly, to escape from Paris, from France, even from Europe.

I dared not even pause to take more



than a cloak, but escaped as I was, throwing aside the disguise I then had, as being the one I should be described under, and for a few hours trusting perforce to the sole disguise of a low, broad hat, and large winter cloak, the immense collar of which, drawn up, concealed all the lower part of my face.

But to pass the *barrières* at midnight might excite suspicion, and I waited until near four o'clock.

Then I fled.



## CHAPTER XIII.

LOUIS BONHEUR EARNS £400 REWARD.

THE darkness and dense snow-storm stood enemies to the Provençale that night, for in its obscurity and amongst a maze of small streets she at last lost the figure that had flitted on before her, and she stopped, worn and weary in body, but heart, mind, every faculty and nerve strung up to the highest tension. That the man in velveteen was St Leger Wolfgang she felt sure enough to make her

very heart beat with sickening hope and fear of having again lost him ; everything that Giovan' had related,—the man's evident newness to his calling, and equally evident shame under it,—his looking so long at the photograph,—had struck her enough to rouse suspicion, now especially when her whole bent was to distrust everything ; the man's appearing from a maison-de-jeu, more akin to what we call so emphatically 'a gambling hell ;' his watching Giovan' ; and when the Parmese left her again, his instant flight—for flight it was, though he never went beyond a headlong walk ; his constant, hurried looking back, convinced her that her suspicion was right, and when the man disappeared she stopped with a deep-uttered—

‘Maladetta!’

And for a moment the girl felt stunned, but only for a moment. A mind like hers could not be inactive or crushed; driven from one hold it immediately turned to another, and did now.

The hour was late,—between eleven and twelve,—and Wolfgang could not leave Paris until morning, except on foot or in a private conveyance, in either of which case he could be traced, even if he left directly; if he waited till daylight she had, at least, six hours the start of him, for by that time he would be watched for at every outlet.

She could not communicate with M. Lamonte until early morning, and meanwhile—

‘Meanwhile, Corsare mio,’ said the weary child, ‘we must send for M. Guido.’

The only telegraph-office open at that hour, the only one of which she knew, at any rate, was R—’s, which was a good distance from the neighbourhood where she found herself; nor was it a very pleasant hour or safe neighbourhood for a young and beautiful girl, though the wolf-hound was, perhaps, an effectual guardian from any personal annoyance. Still, neither hour nor place nor weariness daunted the Provençale.

‘It must be—time is everything,’ she muttered; and wrapping her snow-whited mantle closer, she retraced her steps to the more busy quarters.

It was past one when the cameo-seller

entered R—'s well-lighted, warm office, and addressed one of the clerks.

‘Monsieur, I want a message sent to London; can you send it now?’

‘In its turn, Mademoiselle.’

‘Pardon, Monsieur, I will pay double, triple, but it must go now; it is for life or death.’

An older man, evidently of authority, interposed.

‘Très bien, Mademoiselle; it shall go this moment; tell it me, if you please;’ and he took his pen.

‘Address,’ said Anna de Laval, ‘to M. di Schiara, No. 15, — Square, London. Come over directly with the warrant, Anna.’

‘Your address, Mademoiselle?’

‘No, none; he knows it. You *will* send, Monsieur?’ she added earnestly, as she paid the price.

‘It is being sent now.’

‘A thousand thanks. Bon soir, Monsieur.’

‘I know that face,’ said the elder man, when she was gone. ‘I have seen her, I think, selling cameos on the Boulevards. A warrant! There is a criminal in the question.’

‘Ay, I wonder how that foreigner—who is she?’

‘Oh, a police-agent, sans doute. Schiara, you know, was the name of that famous man they had—that Italian;’ and he once more turned to his work, while Fleur-de-Marie and her faithful hound made their

way back to her lodging; and utterly worn out, both child and dog slept,—the hound soundly, the girl fitfully, restlessly, wakefully, dreaming that she was doing wrong; and with the first dawn of the cold winter's morning she and her companion were up and abroad again.

It was not yet seven o'clock, but the wind had driven the snow into drifts, and a hard frost had frozen the ground to something of the consistency of stone.

The first thing was to get the exact description of the man in velveteen for M. le Préfet Lamonte, and he, she knew, would prefer it first hand; so Anna-Marie went straight to the Rue d'Eau, to the house in which Giovan' Tofanni lodged. It was an old, narrow, dirty *ruelle*, with

tall, quaint houses, in no very good repair, neglected and weather-beaten.

A dirty old woman was sweeping the snow from the door-step, but she stopped as the cameo-seller came up and addressed her in her courteous manner—

‘Madame, will you have the kindness to tell Giovan’ Tofanni to come out to me directly?’

‘Mon Dieu!’ said the woman, staring, ‘he is fast asleep still; ce n’est pas sept heures.’

‘Then he must wake, Madame. Tell him,’ she said, quietly putting a five-franc piece into her hand, ‘that the cameo-seller wants him.’

The woman went in. Anna de Laval paced up and down, not because of the



cold, but because both body and mind were too utterly and painfully restless to stand still.

In a few minutes the Parmese came out, wide awake enough, courtly as ever.

‘Bon jour, Mademoiselle; you are early.’

‘I have need. You must come with me to M. le Préfet Lamonte; it will be worth your while.’

‘You *are* an agent of police, then?’ said Giovan’, as he followed where she led.  
‘What am *I* wanted for?’

There was in his tone a slight tinge of apprehension, and Anna smiled.

‘Fear nothing, mon ami; I am not a police agent, and it is I who want you, I who will pay you for my employer.

You are simply wanted to repeat to M. le Préfet a minute description of the man in velveteen whom you saw yesterday.'

'Oh, is that all?' with evident relief.  
'I do not like coming across the police; do you?'

'Oh, moi j'y suis habituée,' said the girl, carelessly; 'I care nothing about them.'

'M. le Préfet will not be at his bureau at this hour.'

'No; at his own maison, in the Rue de —, where we are going.'

Giovan' said no more. Truth to say, he rather dreaded the préfet, as people of the humble class so often do dread officials of any kind; and when at last they reached the house, he fairly sheltered himself behind his companion.

‘M. le Préfet was not yet out of bed,’ she was told. She wrote a line on a card and sent it to him, and the servant shortly returned with a message—

‘Monsieur would see her in ten minutes;’ and she and Giovan’ were shown into a small room to wait.

In a quarter of an hour the préfet appeared, and the Provençale told her story.

‘Well,’ he said gravely, ‘it may be him, mon enfant. I hope it is, for you and the Count have been indefatigable in the pursuit. You,’ turning to the Parmese, ‘can give me the description. Will you do so?’

Giovan’ gave a minute one, and Lamonte took it down on paper.

‘Thank you.’ M. Lamonte was polite to every one. ‘That will do. Anna, you think he will leave Paris?’

‘Oui, Monsieur; sans doute.’

‘Bien! then all the barrières must be watched, and orders given to look for him in the city also. I will see to it directly. I need scarcely ask you, who know your business so well, if you have telegraphed to M. di Schiara?’

‘I did, Monsieur, at one o’clock this morning.’

‘Eh bien, enfant. He may be here, then, by twelve o’clock. He will come to the bureau, so be there about midday. You, I suppose,’ he added, as Anna rose, ‘have power to employ and pay for information?’

‘Oui, M. le Préfet. If the man has already passed the barrières—’

‘I shall know it.’

‘I shall remain near your bureau, Monsieur.’

‘Do so.’

And with that they parted.

In the street the cameo-seller paused, and put some gold in Tofanni’s hand.

‘Accept it,’ she said quietly, ‘for the present, and do not leave Paris till you hear from me again.’

Giovan’ looked at her and at the gold, and half laughed, puzzled and surprised.

‘Per Bacco! the Signora is generous.’

‘No; only just,’ she answered quickly.

‘A rivederlà, Giovan’.’

Giovan’ lifted his hat high, and re-

turning the salute, turned to retrace his steps. The Provençale entered a café, and having taken some refreshment walked away towards the bureau of M. Lamonte, to go through hours of watching and waiting, the heart-sickening suffering of hard endurance.

Hours,—yes, only three hours as yet, for it was only eleven o'clock, though to her it had seemed as if each minute was an hour; to and fro, to and fro, never out of sight of the bureau, not feeling the outward cold of that winter's day for the internal fever of anxiety that seemed to burn her very heart.

She had paused for a moment listening to a neighbouring church clock striking the hour of eleven, when a brisk step came

along, a man passed her quickly, looked at her, stopped abruptly and came back.

‘A year has altered you,’ he said, ‘but I knew you, and your dog there: it is you who came to me a year ago at the Café Dusèque.’

‘It was me, M. Bonheur.’

‘Ha, ha, your memory is good too,’ said he with a rough laugh; ‘but you are the very person I should have wished to meet, or I must have entered that bureau to earn my reward.’

‘Reward!’ she repeated, drawing a long breath; ‘for what?’

‘Ah, for what, Ma’amselle? £400 sterling offered for any news of one Wolfgang, to whom I sold that revolver. I was going to claim it of M. Lamonte.’

Anna-Marie grasped his arm like a vice.

‘I will pay it you, if you tell me your news; or are you lying?’

He laughed.

‘If I could have got it that way, I would long ago; but you would have found me out, and Schiara is a merciless man.’

‘He is right: tell me what you know, and you shall have the money to-night.’

‘Well, I have just come into Paris from Maux in a *fiacre*, and just beyond the village of L— I was looking out, when I saw a man walking along very quickly. He had a slouched hat and large cloak, but he glanced at the carriage, and I caught a glimpse of his face,—it was M.



Wolfgang, I am sure: that was at nine o'clock, or near it.'

'You are sure of him?'

'Sure; he is marked, you know.'

'Holy Madonna! then he is run down at last, and the money is yours.'

'This evening?'

'Yes, at this bureau; au revoir.'

She turned away, all weariness gone, now that there was active work to be done, and once more entered the bureau and asked for the préfet. He saw her directly.

'Monsieur, I have news of the man. When the Count arrives, tell him to mount instantly and follow me up the Maux road. Wolfgang was seen beyond L— at nine. I am going to follow him in a carriage.'

‘Not alone, my child; take a sergeant with you, if only for your own protection;’ and he rang.

A quiet-looking man in plain clothes came in.

‘Sortiges, you will accompany Mademoiselle de Laval, and be in every way at her orders.’

‘Oui, M. le Préfet.’

And he followed her out.

\* \* \* \*

The landlord of the principal auberge in the little village of L—, on the Maux road, stood at his door, smoking and gazing up the road towards Paris, when he saw a little black speck,—it grew larger rapidly, came nearer, and dashed past him at a headlong speed, — a carriage

drawn by two horses all in a foam, and a large white dog following it.

‘Mon Dieu!’ cried the worthy Jacques, lifting his hands; ‘if they keep that pace round that sharp turn there will be an accident.’

Almost as he spoke the carriage reached the sharp turn in the road just beyond the village, and the next moment he saw the off fore-wheel strike the bank, and the vehicle was thrown over, the horses struggling furiously in the traces.


The aubergiste and half-a-dozen men ran to assist, but even as they reached it one of the occupants of the carriage had got out, and seized the nearest horse’s head. She was a young girl, but she was perfectly cool.

‘Pick up the pauvre cocher,’ she said, with that quiet air of command to which the lower class always give obedience in such a moment, ‘and help out Monsieur from the carriage.’

Two men seized the horses, and another unfastened the traces; the aubergiste assisted out Monsieur.

‘Are you hurt?’ Anna-Marie asked anxiously.

‘Oh, ce n’est rien, Mademoiselle; I am bruised, and my foot is hurt a bit. I cannot walk just awhile. Never mind me; go on. M. le Comte will overtake you,’ he added in a low voice, ‘and the man may be concealed further on. The carriage is not harmed, and shall follow when M. le Comte comes up.’



'Time is everything,' said Anna, giving him some loose change; 'they will take you to the auberge, and summon a doctor. See to him and the cocher, M. l'aubergiste. Venez, mon chien.'

And she walked rapidly away, with Corsare panting still, from his long run. She was a little bruised by the accident, but otherwise unhurt, for her hand had been on the window, and she had held on to it.

It was bitter cold, and the snow lay in drifts on the left side, but she heeded neither cold nor the hard rutty road, save a moment's pause every now and then to listen for the clatter of horses' hoofs.

Walking fast, sometimes running, she got over two miles in barely half-an-hour,

and was still walking on, when Corsare suddenly stopped just where the edge of a considerable wood extended to the edge of the road.

‘Perchè! what is it, cane mio?’

The wolf-hound threw up his shaggy head, snuffing the frosty air, with a low, fierce growl; then laid his nose to the ground, threw it up again, and at last looked at his mistress, whose ear had just caught the distant sound of horses’ hoofs.

‘What is it, amico?’ she whispered, as the dog once more snuffed the air.

‘Eh bien, allez donc!’

The wolf-hound bounded forwards, and plunged into the wood. Anna de Laval could feel every wild throb of her heart as she followed him.

## MANUSCRIPT XXXII.


## RETRIBUTION.

THEN I fled,—I left Paris, left the faubourg—which I neither knew nor heeded—behind me, and gained an open road. I had walked as only a man can who is walking for life; and it was six o'clock before I dared slacken my pace and pause, to try and guess where I was. It was still dark, pitch dark, and freezing hard, but I had placed at least nine good English miles between me and Paris, I knew, by the pace I had kept and the stillness.

Oh, that fearful walk! the horrible terror that was in the darkness, in the rustle of the wind amongst the leafless trees as I passed; in everything there was but one voice, one word—Murder—and *his* face.

If any man, standing on the very brink of crime, shall chance to read this manuscript of a haunted man, let him pause and look beyond the meditated deed; let him not think to escape himself, for it is impossible; let him read this, the story of a murderer, and pause while he has time.

Oh, the hideous punishment of remorse! the awful looking back to what can never be again! to recall the deed done! is this the hell of which men talk?





this the vulture that preyed ever on Prometheus ?

I dared not pause, but pressed on madly ; and when at last dawn broke, and daylight grew slowly upon me, I could see Paris dimly, far away ; in another hour I lost even that.


Once or twice I met country carts and peasants, but I hid myself while they passed, when I could, that there might be no trace of me.

Footsore, weary, and hungry, I came, somewhere near nine o'clock, to a village, and there, at an auberge, I ventured to stop for rest and refreshment. Of sleep I had had none the last night ; and, tired and cold and faint as I was, the warm room and breakfast had a painfully drowsing

effect on me; but I dared not sleep yet.

It was past nine when I paid my reckoning, and once more set out. They told me it was the road to Maux, and that there was another village further on. I remember—I have too much cause to remember, curse it!—passing a *fiacre* driving rapidly towards Paris, but after that the road was solitary.

Two miles or so beyond L— I came to a wood, a thick and extensive wood, more properly, perhaps, a small forest. I paused, struck by the hope of escape and safety it offered. If I turned aside into it, my pursuers—if they were in very truth on my trail—would lose it, and pass on, naturally thinking that I had gone on to Maux. If I could conceal myself there



till dark, I might then hope to effect my flight in safety.

I took a flying leap over the snow, lest a footstep in the snow might give a clue, and plunged into the forest, carefully replacing boughs or brushwood that I had to move. Thus I made my way for fully half-a-mile, and then I came to a shut-in spot where one of the trees was a giant elm, close to which were the remains of a wood fire, the embers still warm.

I wrapped myself in my cloak and sat down, resting against the tree, and tried to think, to plan for my safety ; but anxiety and fatigue of mind and body had done their work, and crushed my powers now when I most needed them, beneath

the weight of heavy irresistible sleep and the torturing dreams which since *that* night had never left my slumbers.

When I lost consciousness I know not, or how long I remained I know not; but the cold probably numbed me, for hours must have passed.

What roused me and made me spring up and stand listening, too benumbed and chilled, too powerless to move, paralyzed with awful fear?

What was it? where was it? the deep bay of a hound from the high road, the sound of cracking underwood. I heard it coming on, on, and could not move, not a step, not a finger. I tried to draw my pistol, but it fell from my powerless hand. The agony of a lifetime was crowded into



those few awful moments, and I grew dizzy. There was a crash of broken wood, a rush, and it sprang upon me.

Then I fought with the dog madly, as only a murderer can fight for life, as only man can fight in the hideous struggle between man and beast,—in desperate, silent horror. O God! O God! it seemed hours, yet was but seconds. I saw her dizzily—that foreign child; I heard her voice—her words of stern command.

‘Down! down! let go, Corsare!’ and her grasp was on his collar.

I staggered back with such a cry of despair as seemed in my own ears like the cry of a fallen spirit might have been.

I faced her, a desperate man, before whom she might well have quailed; but

she never flinched. She had picked up my pistol, and held it in her left hand,—on her guard, I felt.

She said sternly, pointing to the dog,

‘I am going back to the road. If you stir one step, this dog will pull you down, and tear you as he would a wolf. You are warned. Corsare, lie down and watch him,—watch!’

She turned and walked quickly away. The wolf-hound lay down two yards from me with his head laid between his paws, and his eyes watching my face.

I leaned against the tree and folded my arms tightly across my breast, stunned, the power even of suffering paralyzed by the deadness of blank despair.

I knew that my race was run at last.



I covered my eyes, to shut out that horrible, watchful, human gaze, looking out of the dog's eyes. It might have been minutes, or hours, or years that passed—I knew, felt nothing: time itself stood still; but at last—and it seemed years since last night—footsteps came over the ground, and a tall, dark man stood before me. His hand was laid heavily on my shoulder, his voice spoke, thrilling, numbing me with its likeness to *his*.

‘In the Queen’s name, you are my prisoner!’

The touch of Guido di Schiara’s hand, the sound of his voice, roused my fierce hatred of the man, and its power gave strength and desperation. Only Anna-Marie was with him.


‘*Your* prisoner? on what charge, and by what right?’ I demanded, with the desperate boldness of despair.

‘By right of this warrant,’ he answered sternly, ‘in virtue of which you are now going to London to be tried for the murder of Stewart Claverhouse.’

I made no answer, but, with a mad impulse of preservation, threw off his hand, and sprang forwards to fly—mad, mad! He had his hand upon me again in a moment, with a grasp of iron which, from its slenderness, would have seemed impossible: there was no escaping that hold.

He gave me a sting now beneath whose bitterness I writhed.

‘I would,’ he said in the same deep,





stern way, 'have demanded your *parole* not to try that again, but that long ago you dishonoured your name with a lie. I simply warn you that if you move a step for escape, I will manacle you like any felon in the *bagne*. Anna, lead on to the road.'

She obeyed him, and we followed—he and I.

I was beaten,—his captive,—and I cursed him, by his gods, as I walked to the road, at his side.

Standing in the road was a carriage and pair, and two riding-horses, on one of which sat an Englishman, a detective in plain clothes, I was sure; the other must have been ridden by Schiara.


'Entrez dans la voiture, Monsieur,' he said, opening the door.

As I obeyed I looked in his face. I have wondered since, it crossed me vaguely even then, how it was that that man, *his* brother, could resist stabbing me where I stood.

Was I to be alone? if so, I might yet escape. I should have known him better. I saw him lift his hand to the cameo-seller, and she directly came to the door with her dog.

‘Entrate, lie down there,’ she said, touching the front seat, ‘and watch him.’

The wolf-hound, but for whom I had now been free, leaped lightly in, and crouched on the seat, a terrible companion, from whom there was no escape. The doors were shut fast, though the blinds were up, and Schiara lifted Anna to



the box beside the driver ; then he mounted, and took his position on that side, the English detective on the other ; ' my escort,' I muttered, with a bitter curse.

And we started. So for the last time I entered gay Paris, a guarded felon ; I, Casper St Leger Wolfgang.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## BEFORE LUNCHEON CHAT.

‘So the fellow is taken at last,’ said the Honourable Laurence Cleves, son and heir of the Earl of Laneton, and now brother-in-law to Tom Dacre; and he came up to a group of young men and ladies, who, with his sister, Lady Maude, and her husband, were guests at his father’s hospitable country-seat. ‘So the fellow is taken at last; here is the *Times*.’

‘And,’ said another, laughing, ‘here is

Tom just back from town to tell us all the news. What "fellow" is taken?'

'Why, just Wolfgang, the villain who robbed the world of its greatest sculptor.'

'Are you joking?'

'Is he really taken?' cried the ladies.

'By Jove! I'm glad. Hanging is too good for the villain!' exclaimed the men.

'Tom, do tell us,' said his wife, 'for of course you know more than the papers. *Is* he taken?'

'Of course, my dear Maude; taken in, or rather near, Paris, brought to London, brought up before a magistrate, and committed for trial. I was there myself.'

'What did he say for himself?' asked Cleves.

‘Pleaded not guilty, but reserved his defence.’

‘*Not* guilty ? what impudence ! Why, that Roman cameo-seller—the Fiora di Maria, you know—saw the deed. How will he get over that ?’

‘My dear fellow, I don’t know. He’s got an Old Bailey attorney who will help him, I think, without being over scrupulous.’

‘Was she there ?’ asked a young lady.

‘Certainly, Miss Amphlett ; her evidence committed him.’

‘Is she pretty ?’

‘The present company excepted,’ bowed courtly Tom, ‘she is, without question, the most beautiful girl I have ever seen,—as beautiful in her peculiar

style as Mrs Stewart Claverhouse was in hers.'

'Ah, poor young thing!' said Lady Maude, with tears in her eyes. 'It was a most melancholy tragedy.'

'When will he be tried, and where?' said another of the men.

'When? in a week or ten days. Where? at the Central Criminal Court. They would never get an impartial jury at Ernescliffe, so he is to be tried in London.'

'Do you know who is retained for the prosecution?'

'Yes; for Cavagnac—Claverhouse, I mean—told me. He has told his attorney to retain Gus Seymour for his leader.'

'Leader! Is Seymour within the bar, then?'

‘Just taken silk. Didn’t you know it?’

‘No; he’s very young at the bar.’

‘Ten or eleven years’ standing. The luckiest fellow I know,’ said Tom Dacre.

‘He has every reason to be a Q.C. so early. He came to the bar with every advantage.’

‘How so?’

‘He is of good family and some private fortune. He came with a “tail,” and a longish one too; and he is very clever, very clever indeed, and lucky. Even here he has his usual luck in holding his maiden leader brief in so famous a trial as this will be. It will make the man.’

‘I am so glad,’ said Lady Maude Dacre, ‘that Wolfgang is taken. For one thing, among others, we shall get the



Count de Cavagnac—I beg his pardon—Guy Claverhouse, amongst our set again. A most fascinating man,—he has so much of Il Angelo's wonderful charm.'

'How odd to call him by an English name,' said Miss Amphlett. 'I shall always think of him as an Italian, which he is, in fact, except in actual blood.'

'He should take an English wife to unforeignize him,' laughed Lady Maude. 'But, hark! there is the luncheon bell, and mamma, beckoning us from the window. Tom, I mean to see the trial.'


To which Tom, being still in the halo of honeymoonism, answered 'that he was her dutiful slave,' and the party adjourned to the house.

## MANUSCRIPT XXXIII.

‘I have set my life upon a cast,  
And must abide the hazard of the die.’

TEN days to my trial,—*my* trial for murder, before all the world; my dishonoured name a by-word of execration in every mouth, my life suspended on the balance of a hair. If the period of suspense had been longer, I should have gone mad beneath the torture of it.

My mother came, entreating to see me, but I refused. I would only see my attorney; and I told him,—well, not what



I had done, but enough to make him smile and prepare a defence.

‘Trust to me,’ said Mr Grainger, ‘to do my best; only do your part. Keep a cool, steady front, and face the Court and crowd calmly. I grant it is a most trying and painful position for a gentleman, but still—’

Trying, painful! weak words to what it was. No language can describe its suffering and crushing disgrace. To stand there in a felon’s dock, to endure the gaze of that crowd, to face those who had known me and called me, in ordinary *parlance*, friend; worse than all, to know that I was guilty, and that I stood there to see the game for *my life* played out before my eyes. Yet I obeyed the injunction to do my part, and

faced that crowd calm and collected outwardly ; inwardly, who could tell the fire that was consuming me ! Was it for this that I had satiated my fierce, jealous hate of the man I had slain ? was it for this hour I had stained my hands in blood, and written murder on my brow ? if so, the punishment was heavy indeed.

Let me tell it collectedly, if I can.

I looked round, but I felt the red flush cross my face, as I saw the dense crowd below, and met the gaze of what seemed a thousand eyes. For a second my very brain reeled, and everything grew misty only a second, and then again I looked.

Close below me were my attorney, my counsel, Mr Edward Gemison, Q.C., and his junior, Mr Catesby ; on the other

side I saw, and started with a thrill of pain to see, my former schoolfellow, Gus Seymour; and I wondered vaguely if his position pained him. Perhaps not. He had liked, more than liked, Stewart, and must feel only bitterness against me.

Near him I saw two I could not look at without a shiver of dread,—the dark, stern face of Guido Claverhouse, and at his side the cameo-seller, dressed in black silk, looking what she was—a lady, a patrician.

I turned my glance restlessly, for another form very different—my mother's, and I thought I saw her closely veiled.

Then came the impannelling of the jury, but I challenged no one. Each moment of delay was sickening torture. I was only

thoroughly roused by an address, which made me start and shudder.

‘Prisoner at the bar, how say you,—guilty, or not guilty?’

I lifted my head, and looking round, answered distinctly and deliberately—

‘Not guilty.’

But even as the words passed my lips I saw that bitter mocking smile on Guido di Schiara’s handsome mouth, and I turned my gaze to Seymour. How little years ago, when we were boys together, had either of us dreamed of *this*! Did it cross him, too, as he rose to open the case?

And then I had to listen to those clear sonorous tones, telling the story of my crime.

He went back to the very beginning,

assigning—and I knew Cavagnac had told him—the true motives that had driven me on. I learned that the Provençale, ever quiet, languid, courteous, had been from first to last, with that guileful Italian, my evil genius ; that both had been suspicious, and that she had been under his orders ; that she had seen the man Gavannier, or rather Louis Bonheur, buy the revolver, and seen him subsequently sell it to me ; that from that time hers and the Count's suspicions had taken a darker form ; and that from the day of Stewart's marriage I had been under surveillance, the girl watching me closely, as her wandering life gave her better opportunity of doing ; that the night I went to D—she was in the same train, and followed me,—saw me to the small

inn where I hid rather than lodged, under the name of William Lang, and scarcely lost sight of me till *that* night.

I would fain have shut my ears, my senses, to that recital. There was a rushing sound in my head for a minute, but again the distinct voice recalled me to myself. The Provençale was in the witness-box. How lovely, oh, how beautiful she was, but how ill and weary she looked.

‘What is your name?’ asked Seymour.

‘Anna-Marie de Laval, Monsieur.’

The same soft musical tones and delicate plaintive accent as of yore; but she stood there quiet, unmoved, steadfast. I felt that not even Edward Gemieson would shake her one inch.



‘Your employment?’

‘A Roman cameo-seller.’

Gemieson rose fussily, addressing the Court.

‘My lord, this witness is a foreigner, and I must ask that an interpreter—’

‘Stay, Mr Gemieson,’ said the lord chief baron mildly. ‘Witness, can you speak English?’

‘Yes, my lord.’

‘How long have you been in England?’

‘I came to London nearly two years ago, my lord,—early in March, able then to understand a little English. I was here six months, for I only went abroad again in the autumn.’

‘Very well. I think, Mr Gemieson, an interpreter is unnecessary.’

He bowed, and sat down. Seymour went on—

‘You came to England in the March of ’5—?’

‘Yes, Monsieur; the latter end.’

‘Did you know Mr Claverhouse, then going by the name of Count de Cava-gnac?’

‘Yes.’

‘Were you ever in any way employed by him?’

‘I was; first, I think, in May, or thereabouts. I was employed to find out a man, for whom the Count was searching—one Louis Bonheur.’

‘And were you successful?’

‘I was. I saw him the night of that violent thunderstorm, the 5th of June, and

followed him. I saw him enter a gunsmith's shop in the Strand. His name was Stephen Hurne, and through the window I saw him buy a small pocket revolver.'

'Did you ever see the revolver again?'

'Yes; about a month afterwards.'

'Under what circumstances?'

'It was,' she answered, 'one night that I had sung in the chorus at the opera, and I saw two men come out of ——'s.'

'The gambling-house?'

'Yes. I knew them both: one was Louis Bonheur, the other was M. Wolfgang; they went on to the Quadrant, and then turned just under that archway with the lamplight full on them. I crouched in the shadow close by, and heard and saw

plainly. Bonheur showed the revolver, and wanted M. Wolfgang to buy it. He would not at first, but suddenly changed. "Yes, I'll buy it," he said; "it might be useful some way or another; only it's got a mark—letters on it." Bonheur said it was nothing, and M. Wolfgang took it, and paid two pounds, remarking, "The only gold I have about me, and they happen to be Australian sovereigns." They parted, and M. Wolfgang went away with the revolver.'

'Went away with the revolver?' repeated Seymour; 'now, Mademoiselle de Laval, was that the only time the Count employed you?'

'No, Monsieur; by his orders I watched M. Wolfgang—from the day of

the Maestro's,'—for a second her voice faltered, then she went on firmly—'from the day of Mr Stewart Claverhouse's marriage, but nothing came of it particularly until after his return to London, after he and his wife left town for Ernescliffe, where the Count joined them.'

'Well, did anything come of it then?'

'Yes; the evening of the 12th of August the prisoner' (I started; it was the first time she had called me so) 'left his house, and went down to D—. I heard him take his ticket, and went down in the same train, following him when he left D— Station. He took up his residence in a small inn, the Anchor, kept by one Rook; by day he remained there, but at night he walked out into Ernescliffe

Park, and prowled about sometimes near the Hall.'

'How long did this go on?'

'Eight days, Monsieur. The night of the 20th I followed him into Ernescliffe Park, till he sat down under a tree, and lit a cigar. I left him there, and went down on to the beach close by to refresh myself, for I had had little sleep that week, and none at all for forty-eight hours. I sat down behind some rock on the beach, with my dog by me, and, overcome with weariness, fell asleep.'

Again she paused; I knew what agony she was enduring, but not such as I suffered.

'What awoke you?' asked Seymour.

'Monsieur, the voice of the Maestro,

answered by that of M. Wolfgang. Instantly fearing, ready for the worst, I rose, and stood where I could see as well as hear. At last M. Wolfgang, after upbraiding him, said furiously, "You believe in a God; go, then, tell Him this night how Casper Von Wolfgang dares and defies Him!" and that second, before even my hound could move, he drew a revolver, and shot the Maestro. I sprang forwards and caught him as he fell; my dog seized M. Wolfgang, but he stunned him with the weapon, hurled it at me, and fled.'

Seymour gave her a moment, seeing, as I did, that her lip was quivering; then resumed—

'It was night, and stormy; how, then, could you see who shot the deceased?'



‘The moon was shining, and I distinctly saw the man’s face.’

‘Now, look round, and say, on your oath, if you see it anywhere.’

Oh, that grim mockery! Anna de Laval had never once looked even towards the dock; but now, when there was dead silence, when I felt my heart beat, as if every throb were its last, she turned, fixed her stern, melancholy eyes on mine, and, half lifting her slight hand, said, with a look and tone that haunts me now with its horror,

‘That is the man.’

I folded my arms tightly, striving to stifle my heart, striving to endure her steadfast gaze; but my eyes sunk—*I could not bear it.*



The judge addressed her—

‘Witness, think well on the grave responsibility of your position. Are you positive?’

‘My lord, I am positive that the prisoner is the man I saw murder Stewart Claverhouse.’

There was a sensation, an indescribable murmur, instantly checked by the usher, and Seymour resumed—

‘What became of the revolver which the prisoner hurled at you?’

‘When M. de Cavagnac and others came to the Maestro’s assistance, I picked it up.’

‘You have stated that it had a mark, —letters; what were they?’

‘Three words engraved on one of the

barrels, "Vive la République." Bonheur is, or was then, a republican.'

'Should you know it again?'

'Certainly, Monsieur.' I fancied Anna looked surprised.

'Understand me,' said the counsel, impressively; 'and remember how much depends on your answers. Can you swear to the weapon at this distance of time?'

'I can.'

'After you picked it up, what did you do with it?'

'It was in my hand till after the death of Mr Stewart Claverhouse, then I examined it closely, and delivered it over to the Count, who has it still.'

Seymour took something from his

client ; I saw them,—three small revolvers, to all appearance fac-similes.

‘Now, tell me which of these is the revolver that you picked up and delivered to the Count de Cavagnac ?’

Would she fail ? if so—no ; she stooped slightly and laid her hand on the middle one, taking it from him.

‘This is the revolver.’

‘Are you sure ? by what do you know it from these of the same maker, which are just like it ?’

‘By several small things. One of the barrels is graven with the words “Vive la République,” and this barrel is a shade smaller in the bore than the other two: the end of the stock, or butt end, whichever it is called, is slightly bruised, probably by

the violence with which it struck the rock when flung at me.'

'That will do.'

The revolver was handed up to the Court, and I looked anxiously down at my attorney, Grainger. He smiled scornfully, as if to say, 'Nothing at all; I'll blow all this to the winds.'

But I took no hope; even Gemieson could not browbeat Anna-Marie. He now rose to cross-examine her, and from his questions I began to see at least part of Grainger's game of defence.

'You are, or were, a cameo-seller, you said?'

'I was.'

'That is, ostensibly,' added Gemieson

with a sneer; 'but that was not your only means of living?'

'Monsieur, I do not see what my means of living has to do with the question,' said Anna, coolly.

'I daresay; a foreigner is not likely to do so,' said the counsel, blandly; 'but I insist on an answer to my question.'

'You asked none, M. l'Avocat. You made a remark.'

'I ask you whether you lived merely by selling cameos?' said he, slightly raising his never very gentle voice. 'You were a model, were you not, to artists and sculptors?'

I saw her proud lip curl. She saw his drift plainly, though she answered quietly,

plainly. Bonheur showed the revolver, and wanted M. Wolfgang to buy it. He would not at first, but suddenly changed. "Yes, I'll buy it," he said; "it might be useful some way or another; only it's got a mark—letters on it." Bonheur said it was nothing, and M. Wolfgang took it, and paid two pounds, remarking, "The only gold I have about me, and they happen to be Australian sovereigns." They parted, and M. Wolfgang went away with the revolver.'

'Went away with the revolver?' repeated Seymour; 'now, Mademoiselle de Laval, was that the only time the Count employed you?'

'No, Monsieur; by his orders I watched M. Wolfgang—from the day of

young as you were,' said he, with another broad sneer.

I saw Guido di Schiara lift his handsome face, with a dark frown and fierce gleam in the dark eyes, then set his teeth hard, and fold his arms, with such a face as a man only wears when he is forced to sit and hear the woman he loves insulted.

Over Anna's beautiful face a flush passed, leaving it colourless as before; but though there was no other outward sign, I knew how her proud sensitive womanhood writhed.

She looked her questioner in the face, and answered,

'I was not "very intimate" with the Count. There could be no intimacy between a man of his position and a cameo-

Park, and prowled about sometimes near the Hall.'

'How long did this go on?'

'Eight days, Monsieur. The night of the 20th I followed him into Ernescliffe Park, till he sat down under a tree, and lit a cigar. I left him there, and went down on to the beach close by to refresh myself, for I had had little sleep that week, and none at all for forty-eight hours. I sat down behind some rock on the beach, with my dog by me, and, overcome with weariness, fell asleep.'

Again she paused; I knew what agony she was enduring, but not such as I suffered.

'What awoke you?' asked Seymour.

'Monsieur, the voice of the Maestro,



Seymour called the Count, and every eye turned on him. No wonder. He was a noble, handsome man,—more, he was a most striking and distinguished-looking man.

‘I shall not trouble you much. What is your name?’ began Seymour.

‘Guido Egmont Claverhouse, better known as Count de Cavagnac.’

I shivered at his voice, so like—oh, so like!—his murdered brother’s.

‘Permit me, then, to call you so. Look at these three revolvers. Were ever one or more of them in your possession?’

‘Yes; this one.’ He took it up. ‘On the night of the 20th August, ’5—, as I was lifting my brother Stewart from the ground, I saw Anna de Laval pick it up,

and she had it in her hand till after his death, then she gave it to me. "Take it, Monsieur," were her words; "it is the marked revolver which I saw M. Wolfgang buy of Bonheur." Ever since I have had this weapon in my possession.'


'That will do. Mr Gemieson, do you cross-examine?'

He declined. 'He would not trouble the Court yet,' to my surprise.

The prosecution was ended. I knew, at least, the worst they had to say.

Edward Gemieson rose up, tall, burly, important, and spoke, eloquently, certainly, but not as Gus Seymour had spoken.

I think I was the person in that Court most astonished at the defence. It was short, after all.



He said that his client had never bought, never even seen, the revolver then in Court, and that at the very time it was asserted that he was at Ernescliffe he was with his mother in town, as he should prove. His client had never left London till the day *after* the murder of the unfortunate sculptor, and he had then gone to D— under the name of William Lang, in order to meet and get rid of a woman who had been his mistress some years before. He had returned to town, when it reached him that he was charged with a crime of which he knew nothing, and by his mother's advice he had gone abroad for a time,—unwisely, perhaps, but not unnaturally. As to the motive assigned, he really wondered that his learned

friend had named anything so absurd. The accused and Stewart Claverhouse had always been most friendly. Then he went on cautiously, but plainly, to charge the witnesses with at least 'a strong mistake' as to identity and the facts stated. In fine, what he meant, and what the Court must have understood, was, that I was the victim of a plot, the motives for which were plain. Both Egmont Claverhouse and Anna de Laval hated the accused, the latter because he, the accused, had once made her understand that he perfectly understood the relations with the Count, as he should prove. 'And,' he concluded, 'is a man in the position of the accused,—a man of birth and wealth, an English gentleman! is his life to be sworn

away by a common Roman cameo-seller, an artists' model?—and we all know what *they* are;—could they rely on the oath of such a girl, to whom it was nothing to perjure herself for the sake of her hatred or her lover?’

He said everything, in fact, to discredit her evidence; he only just stopped short of saying, in plain words, that Anna, —Anna, who had so bitterly resented my shameful insult,—was nothing better than the mistress of Guido Claverhouse.

I had sunk low, indeed, to take away a girl's name, and that a stranger, a foreigner. If they had told me this! but I started; I had almost spoken out ‘to spare her,’ when I saw him actually put her again into the witness-box; what for but

to make her own pure lips condemn her! How would she bear it? She stood erect, proud, calm, that grand air of dignity I knew so well, patrician in every line of her stately form and classic half-Italian face.

‘You have asserted that you went to D— on the 12th of August; now, at this distance of time how can you swear to a date?’

‘I have every reason to remember it, even if I had not noted it down.’

‘You say you followed a man whom you assert to be the prisoner; are you sure that it wasn’t the Count de Cavagnac you followed to Ernescliffe?’

‘Quite sure, Monsieur,’ she said coolly.

‘But you were there with him at the

Hall after the death of Mr Claverhouse?’

‘Monsieur mistakes,’ she said sarcastically. ‘I was not there with the Count, but with the Signora, Mrs Claverhouse; and when she died I left.’

The answer was more than he meant. Mrs Claverhouse was not likely to be intimate with a girl of questionable character. He passed on.

‘Now answer on your oath,—Did you not dislike the prisoner?’

‘Per Bacco; yes, Monsieur.’

‘Ah, I thought so,’ said he complacently. ‘You hated him because he told you that he knew how you stood regarding the Count; insulted you, shall I say?’

‘The prisoner did insult me,’—and I was confounded by her perfect calmness

and control,—‘but not as you insinuate; the Count’s name was not even alluded to or meant. The prisoner tried to force from me something which I refused to tell; he threatened law; I laughed at his threats, and then he said, “Do you think I don’t know on whose protection you rely?” His insult alluded to the Maestro.’

‘So you say,’ remarked Gemieson; ‘other people may think otherwise.’

Then he tried to shake her evidence, striving to make out that she had obtained the revolver from Bonheur, and suborned his evidence; but it was more than useless, and he let her go.

Next he called the man Rook and his wife, of ‘the Anchor’ in D—, who both deposed that I had never come there till



the 21st of August, and had only remained a day; and then he called a woman whom I recognized as my mother's maid. She swore positively that on the 20th of August I was in the town house. Seymour cross-examined all three, but they were firm. He sat down.

'And now,' said Gemieson, rising, 'I call Mrs St Leger Wolfgang.'

I started violently and irresistibly, and bent forward as my mother came forwards; but I saw Cavagnac whisper to Seymour, and as the clerk approached her to administer the oath, the latter rose.

'My lord, I object: this lady is an atheist, and cannot, therefore, be sworn.'

A sensation again; it seemed to strike horror into the crowd; hypocrites! were

they better than us? I trembled, but my mother was unmoved. She turned, and said distinctly, as she threw up her veil,

‘My lord, the learned counsel is misinformed. I am *not* an atheist, and I desire to be put upon my oath.’

The judge bent his head, Seymour sat down; but as my mother was sworn, I saw that old bitter, mocking smile on Cavagnac’s lips, and on Anna’s.

I knew, as they did, the true value of her declaration; but if it saved me, what cared I?

She, too, swore positively that I was in town with her on the 20th of August, and that that revolver had never been in my possession.

Seymour did not cross-examine, but rose at once to make his reply.

Then all his eloquence was poured out in a speech which pulled down the defence and charges against his witnesses as easily as a child destroys a house of bricks. He ridiculed the idea that Anna-Marie de Laval could have been mistaken as to the man she saw murder the sculptor, and stigmatized as shameful and disgraceful the attempt to damn the reputation of a young girl, for whom it was, perhaps, enough to say that she had been the friend and *confidante* of the late Mrs Claverhouse.

Then the judge summed up shortly and concisely, and the jury retired.

There was a hush. I leaned forward, not sick or dizzy, not deadened. I have heard people talk of their heart standing still at some trifle, but they knew not

what that is. My heart stood still now; it was palsied. I saw nothing, felt nothing, but the awful sense of horror. Did time pass? were those faces below me, or demons? but when they came back, and I lifted my head, it seemed years ago that they had left.

‘How say you, gentlemen of the jury, guilty or not guilty?’

Was not that one moment of silence that followed punishment enough in itself for my crime?

‘Guilty!’

\* \* \* \*

Was it all a hideous dream from which I should awake? the faces below seemed so distant and small. Was that a voice that seemed so far off? who had they tried

for his life? who was that strange old man  
with the black cap on condemning to  
be hung by the neck till he was dead?

Then distinctly rousing to the knowledge  
of the truth, I heard the words—

‘And may God have mercy on your  
soul.’

God! if there was a God, I had defied  
Him! if I had a soul, I had played  
against hell,—and lost.

Body and soul, lost for ever.

## CHAPTER XV.

‘ We hung our harps on a willow-tree.’

THERE was a dense crowd outside the court ; so dense, that most of the carriages, which had brought their titled owners, could not get near it. Two or three had, and amongst these that of Lady Maude Dacre ; and out of the window looked that lady’s pretty face, as she spoke to her husband, who stood by the door waiting till the carriage could move on.

‘ Cruel, shameful,’ she was saying, ‘ to

try and blast that girl's name, a young thing of sixteen or seventeen; a lady, too, Nina's friend. She told me her sad story, and I for one shall show what I think.'

'So shall I,' said Dacre quietly; 'and there is Claverhouse with her on his arm. Peste, they are recognized and cheered. How vexing for them! he'll never get her to his carriage.'

'He is nearer ours.' She leaned out, as Guido and his young companion approached, and said out loud—

'Mr Claverhouse, you will never get a lady through this; put Mademoiselle de Laval into my carriage, and take my husband into yours.'

'Merci, mille fois, Madame. Anna,

Lady Maude will kindly put you down in  
— Square. You will go?’

‘If Monsieur pleases; if I do not intrude on Madame Dacre.’

‘No, no; of course not. Open the door, Count.’

He handed Anna-Marie in, and then lifted Lady Maude’s hand to his lips, and said, in a low voice, so like Stewart’s that it might have almost been the dead she heard—

‘I understand, and shall never forget, your kindness in thus sheltering with your name and rank a young girl who to-day has no protection from the insult but her purity and gentle blood; to-morrow my name will protect her for life.’

‘Ah, your name.’



‘To-morrow will see Anna de Laval my wife,’ he answered ; and bending low, walked away with Dacre, while the carriage moved on.

When it drove up to the well-known house that had been the great sculptor’s, Guido was already there awaiting them, and handed out the Provençale, who, with a grateful ‘Adieu, Madame,’ ascended the steps, but Lady Maude detained Guido.

‘I want to speak to you,’ she said, ‘only you must forgive me. To-morrow is your wedding—’

‘Pardon,’ he said, with a grave sadness that touched her ; ‘it is only a marriage ; there will be no wedding for us.’

‘Forgive me my mistake ; it will be very quiet?’

‘Very quiet, very private; only Dr John, who gives Anna away, and Luigi Padella. You remember him? It could not be otherwise;’ he paused a second, and then added, ‘our betrothal was at *his* death.’

Maude Dacre could not answer for a moment.

‘I understand you, Count; but is it wise to be so almost secret, after what has been said about her to-day in a public court? You are a man of the world, and know how very light a breath will harm a woman, especially one so peculiarly placed as Anna de Laval; in after years, you know, people might shrug their shoulders, even at Mrs Claverhouse of Ernescliffe, and whisper about her former life and

private marriage. Let me fetch her this evening from her lodgings, and take her with Tom and myself to the church.'

'Lady Maude, you are a true-hearted, noble woman;' and strong as was the man's self-control, his delicate lip quivered and his deep soft tones faltered. 'I accept your kindness; I shall never forget it.'

'This evening, then; where are her apartments?'

'It is I who am in my old place in B— street. She is here with my uncle.'

'Then perhaps I had better call for her in the morning. At what hour?'

'Nine o'clock, Lady Maude.' It was all he could answer; and bending over her hand, he turned and entered the house.

Luigi met him in the hall.

‘At what hour to-morrow will the Signor leave town?’

‘At twelve, amico; you are glad to revisit our bell’ Italia?’

‘Sì, Signor, now that the *maladetto* is condemned. Oh, Signor mio; but *that* will not bring us back our dead!’ he said with a burst of grief.

‘Hush, hush! for God’s sake,’ said Guido, hurriedly. ‘I dare not look back or think; it is too much agony.’

And he passed quickly on to the library, where Dr John and Anna-Marie awaited him.

Corsare jumped joyfully upon him, but with a caress he put him down, and turned to tell them what had passed.

‘Maude Dacre,’ said the old man,

after listening, 'is a true, pure woman, and defends a sister from shameful slander. Anna has told me all; it was worthy of Casper Von Wolfgang! but after to-morrow she is safe; you will know how to protect your wife.'

'I shall, indeed,' he answered. 'My wife, my only love;' and he clasped her to his breast, as he had not done since the night his brother had given her to his love and care.

\* \* \* \*

It was no wedding; there were no favours or rich raiment, no white dresses and veils, no guests and feasting; it was a marriage, holy indeed, for love was there, but sad. 'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' the

Psalmist touchingly sings of the exiles; and sorrow had stricken these two very heavily, with a shadow that would last their lives. But it was a holy marriage, sanctified by a love made holy by such affliction as falls on few, hallowed by the spirit of the dead.

Yet not dead, but sleeping; for Art is holy, and the great die not, neither in heaven, neither on earth.

## MANUSCRIPT XXXIV.

‘All was ended now,—the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow.’

AM I alone? am I a felon, condemned to death for murder? will they hang me in three weeks? Only twenty-one days between me and death! how can I die, how can I die with that awful load of guilt upon my head?

Alone! do I crouch in a corner, covering my eyes with my manacled hands, because *I* am *not* alone; because the narrow cell is crowded with hideous

phantoms; because each ghastly form has my face; because there is blood on the bare walls, on the stone floor? alone! when it is lying there in the moonlight, a murdered corpse; when I hear the moaning ocean, and that foreign child's never-forgotten cry; when I see Nina's dead face and white hair, and remember what she was, and the ruin my hand has made?

Does it seem a dream, that long, long ago? Can it be true that I was ever young, and innocent, and free? Is this chained convict, this haggard, gray-haired, haunted man, *myself*, or some hideous demon? where is gay, handsome St Leger Wolfgang? Do I look forward to death with such agonized horror and terror of despair, as can only be known to such as I am, for



whom there is *no hope*, for whom there is nothing but this earth—and this earth lost?

Oh that I could believe! Oh that I had one grain of that Roman girl's simple faith, to light me out to this darkness of doubt and vain longing, this hell of myself!

I am going mad with sin and misery and despair. Oh, for life, only life! will nothing save it? it is all I have, all I have, and they will take it.

\* \* \* \*

Give me paper, pens; let me write; and oh, if in years to come any who are young and innocent read my story, let them remember that I, too, was once innocent, and throw one ray of pity into the

execration they heap upon the name of Casper, Von Wolfgang,—ay, even though he was an atheist and a murderer.

\* \* \* \*

*She* came—Georgine, my mother. Was she changed, as I was? was that wrinkled, haggard woman the once superb Georgine Von Wolfgang? was it my work, too, or her own?

‘Casper, my son, oh, my son!’

I recoiled with a cry, putting out my chained hands.

‘Don’t touch me! mother, there is blood between us, blood and misery and awful sin. Looking back in years to come, forbear to curse the son who has disgraced you, for you have made me what I am. Ay, reproach me bitterly for the word, if

you will—it is true. You who taught my child-lips to scoff and sneer at all which men call holy, and shut out all that was good and gentle; you who put another devil into me, as if *that* were needed, and urged me on to revenge, when you should have let me weep away my sin upon your heart. O mother, O mother! if years ago you had taught me differently, I should not have stood here now, a murderer, doomed to death, without a future, without hope, without a God. Oh that I had died when I was born! I had never then been damned, body and soul.'

'Soul!' she broke out, 'what is it? what is a Deity? We have lived in atheism; die in it: at least, trouble ends in the grave. Sin! who calls it so?

Why reproach yourself with crime?  
there is no God, no responsibility. What  
law but man's makes it sin to take life?  
Was I perjured to swear as I did? No.'

'Mother, mother! if, after all, *he* was  
right. If I had listened to him—'

'*He*, Casper? he was a dreamer!'

'Wiser in his dreams than we are in  
our hard philosophy,' I said, hiding my  
face. 'No more, no more of him. I can-  
not bear the torture.'

She stood looking at me, her breast  
heaving, her fingers locked.

'Mother, what will become of you  
when—when I am gone?'

'I shall go forth alone and desolate,  
to hide my shame in another land,' she  
answered; 'to die as I have lived, free

from the enslaving cant of priests and schoolmen.'

There was a long silence, which she broke at last, as if it tried her.

'Did you believe the charge against that thrice-accursed Provençale?'

I started.

'No; she was—she is pure, at least.'

'Was she?' she sneered. 'He has married her.'

'Married her?'

'Ay; Guido Claverhouse has married Anna-Marie de Laval, the sometime cameo-seller, and taken her to Italy for two or three years. Dr John Fantony went also.' She rose, and moved a step. 'My time is ended. I must come again. You will see me?'

‘No; leave me. I am a felon.’

She drew her mantle about her, and paused.

‘Must we part so? I, who bore you? Can even blood wash out my motherhood?’

Her voice trembled,—*her* voice, and I looked up startled. She stretched out her arms.

‘Casper, my son! in shame and guilt and blood, still my son, my son!’

I fell at her feet, and darkness closed over me. The last thing I heard was her passionate weeping and the clank of my heavy chains on the stones.

\* \* \* \*

I was alone again, but I turned my face to the hard wall, to shut out the day

‘Leave me, Dr Harrington; I want no priest. Why do you come to *me*, a felon, a manslayer?’

‘The Son of God,’ he answered quietly, ‘came to heal those that are sick, not those that are whole. You say you do not want a priest. My son, my friend, you need a God and a future.’

Friend, son! was he sneering? he, the upright man, call a felon friend, mock me with a future? Yesterday I should have laughed him to scorn, even in my misery; but that last scene with my mother had softened me. More than all, in his words, in the almost grand pity of his gray eyes, there was an echo, a shadow of the one who was dead; as if the halo of the sculptor’s spirit looked on me, filled the

narrow cell, and brought back strangely and dreamily his beautiful soul-lit face, his wondrous voice, his look, his every word, not with torturing agony, as of late, but as it used to be long ago, soothing and calm. Was it to be so, after all? was the mystic influence that in his lifetime had charmed and would have lifted me up, to reach me still, even beyond the grave? was he to touch me, his murderer, as I would not be touched in life? Dead! did such as he die? is there something that lives still? was I, on the grave's brink, beginning at last feebly, as one yet groping, to comprehend the secret of his answer, and his strange influence in life and in death? was it the wondrous power of his SOUL?



‘Teach me what it is—this immortality in which *he* believed; this mighty God in whom *he* trusted.’

I sat down bodily at this man’s feet, looking physically in his countenance, and hearing his voice; but something within me was at the sculptor’s feet. My spirit—let me say it now—my soul saw his deep, steadfast eyes, my soul heard the music of his voice, not afar off, but within my very heart, my better angel.

\* \* \* \* \*

Is that the hum and murmur of a vast multitude, gathering already to witness the sight,—my execution? Do I hear it? Does the pen tremble in my hand, and my face blanch in the moonlight? It is trembling now, but I lay it on the open


Book of God at my side; and then, slowly growing upon me, I feel, as I used to feel it years ago, the holy presence of my better angel.

Will the All-just, All-merciful God hear me, even me, at this eleventh hour? I know not; I have dared to believe, dared to hope humbly for pardon, dared to bow myself before the Almighty.

I hear them knocking outside the prison, but it cannot move me. I am past that now, for my life is forfeited, and my sands are run out. Hush! the bell is tolling, they are coming; the crowd without are thirsting for the sight. Well, so be it. Dr Harrington stands there waiting to receive this Manuscript, to do with as he deems best. Perhaps if any should

read this sorrowful story it may serve to warn them off the awful rocks upon which I wrecked my life; and let them— if they can—pray for one whose only hope is in God's mercy, whose only dirge is the hoarse murmur of a blood-thirsty multitude; *his* requiem was the eternal music of the deep-rolling ocean.

THE END.



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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.







